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The Death of the Children

Burnt in a Workhouse fire at Christmas Festivities, June 16th, 1883 (sent to Mrs. Frederic Harrison)

By the late George Gissing

O CHILDREN, Death in kindness bade you rise,
And quit the game, while life was yet but play;
Though sad to us the closing summer day
That quench'd the gleam of laughter in your eyes.
What though the anguish of the dread surprise
Marr'd the young faces when at rest they lay?
One moment summ'd the sorrow-laden way
We weary o'er in growing old and wise.

Mourn not the children. If we needs must mourn,
Be it for those their loss leaves desolate,
While death withholds his oft-entreated boon.
And should *they* sorrow, that, by toil unworn,
Their dear ones rest so early, and kind fate
Spares them the heat and burden of the noon?

Shakespear and a Woman

By Stephen Phillips

My life glides unreproached, unbreathed of scandal,
In the English Midland town;
No man I owe; as I pass they stand bare-headed;
A tale will empty my purse.
Each Sabbath morn I listen to the wheedling vicar,
As he begs from a Hebrew tent;
Faultlessly, dimly attired, my lavender rarest,
About me voices are soft;
Sweet is my little garden just after sunrise,
Sweet in the coming of night;
Yet to me the very flowers have a human longing,
A mute and upward look,
And I, my God, am lone, lonely for ever,
Am well, but wither within;
And in dead of night I lack the cry of a boy child,
Or the struggling lisp of a girl;
Must I linger on and languish among the town folk,
Who guess not the ache at my soul?
Must I drift at length to the everlasting lumber,
That cumbers a thriftless world?
And the young wife dies in my street, but really survives me;
At least she has felt in the sun;
And the girl deceived by her lover, and thrown from the house-door,
Those tears are richer than mine;
Yes, better the plunge in the Thames, the sudden seeking,
Than a death which was never a death!
Shakespear, of women confessor, from whom no secret
Of a woman's bosom was hid!
From the page of a man long dead, my comforter cometh,
And leaps from print to my life.

SHAKESPEAR AND A WOMAN

No woman so understood, or sang of a woman,
As a man with a poet's heart.
Spite of my prison perfect, respecting gaolers,
Thou understandest, enough!
To be young in Egypt, to lie with Cleopatra,
To have some Anthony's kiss!
She drank of a heaven by Nile, a world in the balance;
Even with the asp at her breast,
She gave as a mother her breast to a mortal baby,
For a long immortal kiss.
Have centuries passed? Shall centuries then oppress me,
This dimness in place of the glow?
This soul can love as they loved, whose stars were huger,
This dim town is for a time.
For the bare passing of time can touch not the spirit,
Though a moment may mar it quite,
And often the slip of a moon on an ebon night-sky
Hath 'wildered a boy and a girl.
For a while I am pent from life, am hindered from living,
For a while and yet for a while!

Where Heaven and Earth Touch

By Mrs. Thomas Henry Huxley

FAR away in the distance, with longing and rapture heart-free,
As a girl I gazed right away, where the heaven touched the sea,
I wished for the wings of a swallow to get to the Great Beyond
And so at the last discover what should to my soul respond,
The key to my dearest wishes, the full cup of desire,
The reaching to high ambition, till I could get no higher,
The finding ideal love in one man's kindred soul,
The love that makes the breakings of life a thing to thole.

These are the things I saw, while the heaven touched the sea,
These are alone the things that remain of worth for me.
And still as I sit at the window and gaze in my old, old age,
I say to children and grandchildren, turning Life's yellow page,
Secrets are yet to be found that can still move the soul in me,
When the Heaven bows down and touches Earth's vast unquiet sea.

Two Poems

By H. T. W. Bousfield

After Many Days

How shall we meet, our days of waiting over,
Shall we speak lightly, less than lover-wise,
Mark how the bees are humming in the clover,
Reading each other's eyes?

What shall we say? I wonder; shall I find you
Walking bareheaded, all your hair aflame,
Singing, nor dreaming I might be behind you
Until I cry your name?

Will you be changed? And I? I shall be older,
Graver, maybe, appraising all your charms,
Or will the weary years have left me bolder,
Taking you in my arms?

Shall we not meet half fearful, half rejoicing—
Time is a coward working in the dark—
Then silent pause as if the world were voicing
Love in the distant lark?

Nay, for I fear our hearts so starved and aching,
Through the long wilderness of wasted years,
May break for joy, unless our passion waking
Shatter the past to tears.

Oh, kiss me gently then, no raptured greeting
As if we had some sorrow to efface,
Children we were, we'll be two children meeting
After a little space.

A Ballad of Pity

Love, you are mine, all mine, although
New faces greet you every night,
New voices whisper out of sight,
And fresh hearts glow.

Your mien is not the mien of one
Whose heart is pure, whose ways are strait,
Who has not loitered by the gate
At set of sun.

Your glance is not the glance of truth,
Your lips are reddened every day,
Your smiles invite about your way,
And bring me ruth.

For every day I meet the eyes
Of those who love you for a price;
Your soul is stained, your heart is ice,
Your body lies.

And yet my love knows naught of gold,
The gold that gilds your sorry name,
The tarnished gold that cries your shame,
For you are sold.

I love you, I, who never kissed
The hair that ripples to your knee;
Your soul was never marred by me,
But well I wist

That I might find you in the throng
Where men and devils come and go,
Where lurk the sins you die to know,
Yet live too long.

TWO POEMS

Oh love, in other worlds than this,
    Where cool winds murmur in the leaves,
    Where purer gold within the sheaves
Buys purer bliss,

We two may join in hand and heart
    With all the ancient sins forgot,
    And you may love and suffer not
Within the mart.

An Idyll of Dawn

By Ethel Archer

The dark sea moans to the deaf shore,
The dead sea-wind is out of tune,
And like a hollow lamp, the moon
Lies flickering on the star-strewn floor.

(That late as some fair Mænad glowed,
Swift traversing the Halls of Night.
A meteor spanned her forehead bright,
And comets for her tresses flowed.)

For her the white foam Nereids bore
Pale flowering gems, but all in vain,
Since ever was her bounty fain
To scatter wide those pearls she wore.

Far on the swart Night's Ethiop skin
She scattered them—till Day had drawn
His fiery cohorts of the Dawn,
To compass her and all her Sin.

So—he approaches—in the East
His spear drips blood; the stars grow pale,
There is a murmur in the gale
Which speaks of vengeance dire, increased.

The wan moon sickens—Night has fled
To dimmer regions, fiery pale,
And all ensanguined glows the veil
His late love quickened. He has sped,

Vile cowardly traitor to the last,
To that dark world where shadows dwell,
Safe-fortressed in the heart of Hell,
Where none may look on him aghast.

AN IDYLL OF DAWN

What matter! Day has triumphed! Soon
His torch shall light the corpse-cold pyre
That dead love presses; swift and dire
Shall be his vengeance, and the noon

Shall find no traces. Swifter, higher,
Leaps the destroying flame; the fire
Curls fierce-caressing, like a brood
Of famished scorpions, sun-imbued

And sunlight-dazzled; bodies nude
As molten metals that have wooed
White shimmering heat: till one vast spire
Shivers the blue—'tis Dawn's desire!

Lips of My Love

By Katharine Susannah Prichard

Adventurous lips
That o'er me rove,
So swelling soft
And smelling like the rose
Lips of my love! My love!

Lips of the bee
That cling
And fall from clinging,
Yearning,
Drunk with bliss!

Dear lips
That to me prove
My body
But a chalice, white,
For thy delight,
My love, my love!

Oh, I am faint
When thy lips hang on mine
And there is ecstasy
In their mute questing,
Easting, westing.

So,
They are gentle
As the brooding dove,
Fierce as twin birds of prey,
Lips of my love! My love!

The Poets and their Friends

By Henry Newbolt

EVERYONE with a sensitive regard for any great interest has felt at times the irony hidden in the name of "friend": even more perhaps than others the poets have known what it is to be wounded in the house of their friends. They do not suffer much from their enemies, those colour-blind and half-disabled people who would limit the activity of the human spirit to the operations of pure reason—to using, measuring, comparing, and arguing about the material objects of perception. If the poets have to face the contempt of the ultra-scientific, they hardly wince before it. They may even be amused by the curious belief of prosaic minds that poetry is a kind of external decoration applied to ordinary speech, with the result of giving a vague and unsatisfactory account in place of a statement more precise and more in accordance with common sense. There is little sting in such opinions as these, however vehemently they may be pressed. The wounds that hurt are the unintended ones, the side blows dealt by the professed lovers of poetry, by the professed friends of the poets. We may not quarrel with these, for they are genuine friends; but it would be hard if we might not describe them to themselves, in the hope of a better understanding.

Let us speak first of a friend whom we may call the scholar, one with whom we must all be familiar. He has received, probably, a classical education; he has been taught that Greek and Latin poetry is the almost unapproachable model of all verse; under the influences of school and university he has steadily developed his taste for the dead languages as languages and limited his taste for their poetry as poetry. In time he will, as likely as not, become a teacher himself, and will impose the same fetters upon others—for a human spirit *is* fettered when it

abandons free movement and binds itself by a tradition, a prejudice, a belief in method.

It is the historical method which appeals to the scholar, and if he would use it only in its own place, I should have nothing to say against it. My argument is that for the enjoying, understanding, and estimating of poetry, which is a direct first-hand record of spiritual experience, the historical method cannot be said even to exist.

Let us consider the matter. Our scholar starts from the fact that from the earliest days of literature known to us one poet has often drawn something from the work of another; and further, that several, or perhaps many, poets will at times draw from one predecessor and resemble him and each other closely enough to be regarded as a group or school. Now this is undoubtedly a fact, and the scholar commonly holds it to be a fact of interest to the student of art. To the student of the history of art it may be of interest; the question is whether it is of interest or of value to the student or the lover of the art itself. Those who rule the scholastic world or spend their lives in it, anxious to make everything into the subject of a lesson, seize upon this fact; and if they, and those who favour their methods, were allowed their own way, we should have poetry taught invariably as a branch of history; and the more closely scientific, the more remote from feeling the study was, no doubt the more it would deserve to rank as history. What may be of value to the student of other arts we need not presume to say, but I am sure that for the student of poetry this history of influences is very negligible. It is, in fact, a point of craftsmanship; and the past history of his craft, though perhaps not entirely useless to the poet, is certainly of no vital concern to his readers.

I do not intend to say that it is not "interesting." When I chance upon the Elegies of William Whitehead, and find them to be extraordinarily like—and unlike—the work of Gray, I am certainly amused:—

> Amid these mould'ring wastes, this marble round *
> Where slept the heroes of the Julian name,
> Say, shall we linger still in thought profound,
> And meditate the mournful paths to fame?

---

* On the Mausoleum of Augustus.

What though no cypress shades, in funeral rows,
  No sculptur'd urns, the last records of fate,
O'er the shrunk terrace wave their baleful boughs,
  Or breathe in storied emblems of the Great;

Yet not with heedless eye will we survey
  The same, though chang'd, nor negligently tread;
These variegated walks, however gay,
  Were once the silent mansions of the dead.

In every shrub, in every flowret's bloom
  That paints with different hues yon smiling plain,
Some hero's ashes issue from the tomb,
  And live a vegetative life again.

Perhaps, my Villiers, for I sing to thee,
  Perhaps, unknowing of the bloom it gives,
In yon fair scion of Apollo's tree
  The sacred dust of young Marcellus lives.

Why do we not read more of William Whitehead? Perhaps because we are in search of poetry, and these verses of the eighteenth century, for all their reminiscence of the country churchyard and their anticipation of Edward Fitzgerald, are hardly poetry.

Let me take a more serious example. Here is the "Charme" used to defeat Circe's enchantment, in a mask by William Browne, of Tavistock, first acted when Milton was a boy of twelve:—

Sonne of Erebus and Nighte,
Hye away; and aime thy flighte
Where consorte none other fowle
Than the batte and sullen owle.
Where upon the lymber grasse
Poppy and mandragoras,
With like simples not a few,
Hange for ever drops of dewe,
Where flowes Lethe, without coyle,
Softly, like a streame of oyle,
Hye thee thither, gentle Sleepe,
With this Greeke no longer keepe:
Thrice I charge thee by my wand,
Thrice with moly from my hand
Doe I touch Ulysses' eyes,
And with the jaspis: Then arise
Sagest Greeke.

Warton comments:—"In praise of this song, it will be sufficient to say that it reminds us of some favourite touches in Milton's *Comus*, to which it perhaps gave birth." That is better than accusing Milton of plagiarism, but it is equally far from truth. The song is beautiful in itself, and gains our praise for its poetry, not for reminding us of a later and

greater poet. Moreover, to reverse the case, when we read *Comus*, we do not remember Browne's Maske; and if our friend the scholar insists that we shall do so, we regret the distraction, and are the losers by it. No doubt, if it is Milton rather than poetry that we are thinking of, it may help us to know what were the kinds of knowledge which went to his development; though even then this evidence is probably rather evidence of his taste than of any change actually worked in him by what he read. But to teach, to establish a school of teaching, on such lines is to represent literature merely as a hunting-ground for parallel passages. The classics have long been taught in this way. From the point of view of those who wish to see them regarded as literature, it is a way which is as disastrous as it is easy. But the scholar, even when he is not teaching, even when he is writing about poetry for his own pleasure and the pleasure of his readers, too often shows a leaning towards this view of his subject. He falls easily and frequently into the way of using a biological figure of speech; he talks of poetry as if it were some strange animal; he speaks of it as "advancing rapidly to new conquests" or as "finding sustenance with difficulty in the desert of a material civilisation." "What was poetry doing now?" he asks. "Poetry was making a strenuous effort to adapt itself to the conditions of the new age." "Poetry, on the death of such and such a poet, may be said to have expired." This way of speaking is, of course, only metaphorical, but it is the outcome of a fallacious way of thinking. We are accustomed, and not without reason, to think in this biological way of society, of national life; but a nation may be compared to an organism with far more truth than poetry can be. A nation is a corporate body; it is composed of individual particles which change only by degrees. One by one they pass away, and are replaced imperceptibly by others. The result is something which does undoubtedly resemble the growth of an animal. But poetry is not a corporate body. It is, on the one hand, a spirit, animating one individual here and another there; on the other hand, in its outward manifestations, it is a collection of works produced by that spirit working in individuals. What we desire to get from it is not any kind of dealing with a corporate body; it is direct contact with the spirit of the

individual, and anything which tends to interrupt this direct contact is a positive disadvantage.

If we must adopt some metaphorical way of speaking of the effect of one poet or one generation of poets upon another, it would be more justifiable to treat them genealogically, as ancestors and descendants; or to use a purely mechanical figure, to talk of poets as a set of levers acting one upon another or as a set of cog-wheels in a large machine; for in the case of a machine there can be no danger of introducing the mistaken idea of a corporate life, while there is a certain analogy between the influence of one poet upon another, and the force received by one wheel from another and communicated by it to those which come next.

There is, however, room for a fallacy here, too. The set of influences which may be observed in English literature has not followed an orderly development; the force has not passed directly from father to son or from wheel to wheel in a true series. Chaucer influenced Spenser, Shakespeare, Keats, and William Morris, not in succession, but separately; and the influence is strongest and most direct upon the latest of them. Every man is, no doubt, to a certain extent, made by those who have gone before, in so far as he is conscious of them. But it is by no means always the case that he has been conscious of all his predecessors, or that those of whom he has been conscious have communicated to him what is spoken of as *Force*. Most often what they have given him is not the power, the compelling vision, which is the only thing of importance, but merely the material, the old iron for his melting-pot, or the manner, which may perhaps be compared to the patina or surface colour of the metal. Lewis Morris, in his imitations of Tennyson, is a conspicuous example of both kinds of borrowing. He aims at treating a Tennysonian subject with Tennysonian finish. But what we care for, what the reader of poetry cares for, is not the subject or the superficial treatment; especially we ask not what went into the melting-pot, but what comes out of it; melted by what fires and cast into the mould of what new individuality.

Now it is certain that the last thing which should be present to the consciousness of a poet is a knowledge of what influences he is obeying, what school he belongs to.

If he were, at the moment of writing, conscious of influences or of his position in a school, the first thing he should endeavour to do would be to get rid of those recollections, for they would be not a help, but a hindrance to him.* And whether he is conscious of them or not, such influences certainly are more often a hindrance than a help. The advice given to his younger contemporaries by a great poet still living has always been, "Do your best to get clear of the old ruts"; and one of the great disadvantages of a young poet who begins to write in an age of much education and much knowledge like the present is that he is obliged to start in these old ruts, and may find it so long and difficult a business to escape from them. In the same way we have for years past heard painters crying out against the bondage of an academic technique. Post-impressionism is but a desperate attempt to escape from ruts.

Let us now turn to another typical friend, the antiquarian. He is even more dangerous than the scholar because his activity is, in itself, wholly good. He works in the interest of poetry, and gives help which is indispensable to the right enjoyment, or at least to the complete understanding, of it. Nevertheless, that help is often fatal in its results. He may be, and indeed often is, far from disbelief himself, especially at the beginning. Some love of poetry must be his starting-point, but he is a potent cause of disbelief in others. How many generations of schoolboys have had it painfully ground into them that to know Shakespeare is to have a sufficient acquaintance with the obsolete words he uses, the obscure events to which he alludes, the technicalities of falconry, law, or heraldry, from which he draws his metaphors? The schoolboy, perhaps, can defend himself—he has great natural powers of resistance—but among grown men the same belief persists, and is still more widely disseminated.

It is true that studies of this kind are invaluable, but they are chiefly invaluable for the removal of stumbling-blocks. Certainly thousands are shut out from the England of Chaucer only because they have not learnt the manner of speech there used. It is undeniable, too, that facts

* For example see Wordworth's unfortunate footnote to his "Tintern Abbey" poem. "This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young's, the exact expression of which I do not recollect." He recollected too much, not too little.

may be of some importance. Much of the poetry of Byron and Shelley is what may be called poetry of personal experience; that is, it is directly founded, not upon a purely spiritual experience, but upon an actual experience, an event in the world of time. Even in such cases as this the poem will often, perhaps more often than not, be sufficient in itself—it will be its own sufficient interpreter. We shall be able to gather from it the general aspect of life which is moving the poet, and the particular fact may be dispensed with. I have already remarked that for the appreciation of Shelley's poem, "Away, the moor is dark beneath the moon," it is quite unnecessary for us to know the story of the quarrel with Godwin and of the subsequent elopement with Mary and Claire. But a knowledge of that story and all that it implies is necessary for the understanding of Shelley himself, of the man, the personality which this poem and all the others express.

I need not multiply examples to prove this point. They will appear sufficiently in the separate studies of poets. What I wish to be clear about now is this: it is evident that there will be, from time to time, the greatest difficulty in deciding what facts of research are important and what are unimportant in dealing with the work of any particular poet. We may say in general that in the case of a poet of any great interest there must be some biography. It will sometimes be an advantage, and sometimes a pleasure (for there are readers to whom it does give a kind of pleasure), to understand thoroughly the position of the poet at the moment of writing by tracing the literary influences which may then have been bearing upon him, the reminiscences which formed part of the content of his mind, and also the exact nature of the stimulus which set that mind in action. What we must not do, what we must be on our guard against doing, is to imagine that either historical or antiquarian research can have anything to say to the vital essence of poetry. We must resist any influence which would tempt us to believe it possible that poetry is itself an external thing, or that it can possibly be known by its external causes. People often try to excuse, as it were, their liking for poetry by professing to base their approval of a poem on its biographical, historical, or antiquarian interest. The interest may be there, but, if so, it exists

independently of the poetic quality. For example, there is a well-known passage in *Hamlet* in which Shakespeare alludes to the recent acting of plays by the company known as "The Children of the Chapel Royal":—

HAMLET. What players be they?

ROSENCRANTZ. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

HAMLET. How chances it they travel? Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

ROSENCRANTZ. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

HAMLET. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?

ROSENCRANTZ. No indeed they are not.

HAMLET. How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

ROSENCRANTZ. Nay their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace, but there is, Sir, an aerie of children, little eyasses, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for't; these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages—so they call them—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and scarcely dare come thither.

HAMLET. What! are they children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

ROSENCRANTZ. 'Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy; there was for a while no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

HAMLET. Is't possible?

ROSENCRANTZ. Oh, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Without the good antiquarian's help it is quite impossible for anyone to understand what this means. But for the reception of the intuition which is the play of *Hamlet*, it is not in the least important that we should understand. The point is an extraneous one, the interest is purely topical and temporary. We lose something that the Elizabethan audience gained; but it is something that is artistically irrelevant, and therefore, in reality, no loss at all. The antiquarian knowledge, when conveyed to us, is certainly amusing, and it is easily conceivable that in the history of the stage—or, at any rate, in the history of the Elizabethan stage—it may be a point of some interest; but in representing the play, or in reading it, the passage might with perfect safety be entirely omitted, only that it is unnecessary to do so. It enters in at the ear or the eye, but the mind passes over it precisely as it would pass over a quotation in a foreign tongue, not understood, if it occurred in

the midst of a page whose meaning was otherwise perfectly clear.

A second example is this. In a recent representation of *Twelfth Night* it was observable that one part, that of the Fool, contained a good deal of jest and repartee which is entirely unintelligible to a modern audience. It is not merely that it is conceived in a taste that is not the taste of our time; it is also full of allusions, full of a play upon words which are now quite unintelligible to us; yet the general effect is not materially lessened. The power of the acting and the power which lay behind that, the power which went to the creation of this part, was amply sufficient to carry the whole, as a whole, into the mind of even a modern audience. All that was obsolete, all that had by the lapse of time lost its original fragrance, its original meaning, was passed over as easily and as lightly as if it had only been an unimportant word which the ear had missed here or there. The loss to us in this case is a real loss, because it is a loss of something originally relevant; but it is a negligible loss because enough remains to make the sense intelligible and to bring us into the same state of sympathy as the contemporary audience who caught every syllable.

These two influences—the historical and the antiquarian—may be described as wholly scholastic ones. "L'antiquité est le pain des professeurs." Closely akin to these, as being in origin scholastic and quite as widely spread, is the opinion of the amateur who may be called the Horatian. In a very hopeful view it might be imagined that this friend, being in truth a survival from the eighteenth century, may perhaps be not much longer with us. It is better, however, to face the unfortunate fact that he is truly national, truly representative, in his view of poetry, and that he is not unlikely to be with us as long as poetry itself.

Briefly put, his belief is that poetry consists in the versification, the terse, the neat, the witty, the felicitous versification, of what he would call sound sense—that is to say, of almost undiluted prose. The holder of this creed is, of course, by nature unfriendly to any display of emotion; his belief, like his education, harks back to the Romans, and he claims their authority for his doctrine of

self-repression in all things and before all things. It is he who is most frequently found complaining that new writers, writers who use either a metre or rhythm which is not familiar to him, are indulging in verse which "will not scan," which is "lawless," or "irregular," or "unmusical." It is he who believes that one of the principal functions of poetry is to provide apt quotations for use in Parliament or upon public platforms. It is he who demands most strongly that poetry, as he calls it, shall deal only with the outward aspect of life, and shall not touch upon what he is apt to describe as "disagreeable problems." It is he, above all, who holds and fosters the belief that poets of a poetical kind are inferior beings of weak constitution and hysterical habit of mind, devoid of natural decency. His chief enthusiasm is reserved, of course, for the works of Horace. For Horace he has a profound veneration, for his works something like passion, but he is always ready to welcome in the name of poetry anything that is, in fact, of the nature of a well-turned epigram; and for the contents of that epigram he greatly prefers his own more ordinary thoughts, or rather his own opinions, upon the moral aspects of public life or private conduct. When he turns from the Latin to our own inferior literature, it is, of course, Pope and the followers of Pope that he finds most congenial. Single lines, such as "The proper study of mankind is Man," "An honest man's the noblest work of God," or rounded couplets like this—

> For forms of Government let fools contest;
> Whate'er is best administer'd is best.

or this—

> What can ennoble sots or slaves or cowards?
> Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards.

—they drop from the Horatian's lips almost as readily as "Odi profanum" and "Justum et tenacem." And beyond these mere single pearls there are often jewels of more elaborate workmanship more solemnly exhibited :—

> The bliss of Man (could Pride that blessing find)
> Is not to think or act beyond mankind;
> No pow'rs of body or of soul to share
> But what his nature and his state can bear.
> Why has not Man a microscopic eye?
> For this plain reason, Man is not a Fly.

> Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n,
> T'inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n?
> Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
> To smart and agonize at every pore?
> Or, quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,
> Die of a rose in aromatic pain?
> If nature thunder'd in his op'ning ears,
> And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
> How would he wish that Heav'n had left him still
> The whisp'ring Zephyr and the purling rill?
> Who finds not Providence all good and wise,
> Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

I am not, of course, contending that the Horatian is wrong in admiring Pope, or that Pope was no poet; but science, argument, instruction are not themselves poetry, however wittily and rhythmically expressed. Pope's own disclaimer is explicit In the Introduction to the *Essay on Man*, he says:—

"This I might have done in prose, but I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious: that principles, maxims, or precepts, so written, both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards. The other may seem odd, but is true; I found I could express them more *shortly* this way than in prose itself; and nothing is more certain than that much of the *force* as well as *grace* of arguments or instructions depends on their *conciseness*."

He wrote his prose in verse, but he did not call it poetry; that is the error of his worshippers.

These views, the historical, the antiquarian, the Horatian or epigrammatic view of poetry, I have treated as deplorable because wherever they are held and expressed they tend to obscure or displace the true view of poetry, and thereby to render poetry itself unintelligible and unpopular. I have now to speak of a view which is still commoner and more insidious: it is not the opinion of a sect, but seems to have become an established part of the prevailing confusion. Everyone knows that, although there is a very great demand for poetry in this country, the works of living poets are very seldom bought. Here and there there is a favourite, but by the ordinary practice a poet must wait for popularity until he is dead, or, at any rate, until he has been writing for a long period of years and little more can be expected of him, that is, until he is sufficiently dead to be considered as a classic. It would

seem that most of us are unable to write or think even about the arts without introducing, however unconsciously, the idea of competition and of promotion by stages. We seem to hold by nature the schoolroom view of literature. It is a poet's duty to begin by taking as high a class as possible, and then to go on writing steadily and with effort until he leaves. If he maintain his effort consistently through a long career, he may hope at last to win for himself a place of honour—what is called a niche in the Temple of Posterity. In the beginning of this process he is generally termed a "minor poet"—that is, a poet who has not yet arrived, is not even within sight of the moment of arrival. Towards the middle of his career he reaches a period at which it is extremely difficult to class him as either major or minor, and very probably he will not succeed in passing out of this indeterminate stage. If he does, if at his death there is an outbreak of public interest in his works, and if that interest is sufficiently durable, he may be considered to have passed out with credit, and he will definitely take his place among the major poets. His complete works will then be published and eagerly bought, if only to be given away; he will be among the English classics.

The explanation of all this is quite simple. At the bottom of it there lies a right reason, the recognition that the poet is more important than his poetry; that it is his personality, his personal view, and not a single performance of his of which we are in search. When a man is dead, we have his work complete; there is nothing more to wait for or collect. His personality, in so far as he was able to express it in poetry, is there before us. The facts of his life which were previously unknown to us, or very partially known, or inaccurately known, generally appear in their entirety. The revelation contained in the poetry is frequently supplemented by letters or by other documents which were not available during the man's lifetime. The effort to grasp the personality as a whole is then felt to be worth while, whereas the act of reading a living poet forces upon us, if we think at all, the continual formulation of a hypothesis which must change from time to time, and which may prove, after all, to have been very erroneous. As with friends, so with a poet and his reader; it is quite

possible for time to bring a drifting apart, a separation which may prove perhaps to be permanent. When Wordsworth's revolutionary opinions gave place to a cooler judgment, it is more than possible that he lost many of his readers for ever. When Byron was forced to leave England, it is probable that though he gained readers, he lost adherents. His case is a doubly significant one, because it reminds us that so long as a man is living, so long as he remains in the sphere of active life, it is always possible that a moral view may come in at any moment to change, or interfere with, the purely artistic view of his work. Moreover, during a man's lifetime, his social position or his social credit may have an effect upon our judgment. The greatest of our poets was only a player who went here and there and made himself a motley to the view.

There is, then, a very natural reluctance to trust to guidance while our estimate of the guide must still be imperfect and may yet be completely upset. Nevertheless, I believe that this reluctance is unfortunate in its results, and should be overcome at any cost. If it is important that we should have any dealings with poetry at all, it is surely doubly important that we should understand and value rightly the poetry which is being written by our own contemporaries: the poetry which is, in a sense, our own, the poetry of our own generation. Of course, if a poet deliberately withholds himself from his public, if he will not speak out, if he takes the view that his inner life, even that part of it which bears upon the production of his poetry, is his own concern and no one else's, then the blame must lie partly with himself if he is misjudged. But a poet does not, as a rule, confine his poetry to the external facts of life or treat it as a thing which is concerned with externals and not with the inner man. He reveals in his poetry that which is relevant, and withholds only that which is irrelevant. The more truly poetical a man's work is, the less it depends for its interpretation upon a knowledge of anything outside itself.

Towards the end, then, of a man's career, if not earlier, we have in reality his work as a whole before us; we know him with almost the same intimacy as that which will come at the moment when he finally leaves this world. It is

not, however, the completeness of our knowledge of him which promotes him to his place, which makes him a major poet. Let us be under no mistake about this. The great poets of the world were never, at any moment of their career, minor poets. Keats was not a minor poet when he wrote *Endymion*; Browning was not a minor poet when *Pauline* appeared. Probably not many among their readers would have admitted, at this time, that they had any claim to be called major poets, but, however slow the recognition, the new vision was there: the poem in each case revealed a personality of greater import than anything which it had yet produced. Keats and Browning were unpopular, but they could not long remain obscure. It is not at this stage, but at the stage which follows, that the trouble really begins. In this country the public do not like reconsidering their judgments, nor do they like the effort which is involved in mastering anything which is complex. The result is that in all the arts a man is too often expected to limit the line of his development by his earliest successful performance. What is required of him for popularity is that he shall not disturb the first impression, that he shall continually repeat the subject and the treatment by which he made his reputation. But this is to ask something which in the nature of art is impossible. A man cannot, in any true sense, repeat an intuition once expressed. With poets, as with other men, life means change; and if we are to follow the poet, we must follow his changes. Even if the disturbing element of which I have spoken should happen to come in, even if upon a further knowledge the poet should prove to be more versatile or more revolutionary than we had hoped, we must have the courage to perform the necessary act of assimilation, we must re-form our hypothesis, we must readjust our point of view. The judgment of a work of art is not a judgment by the eye or by the ear; it is the judgment of spirit by spirit, and must be performed, before all things, with sympathy.

It is, no doubt, a great demand that poetry makes in asking that every reader, however humble, however limited, should be able to adapt himself with sympathy and understanding to the development of a personality probably far wider and more complex than his own. This may well seem to be almost impossible, but it is, perhaps, the greatest

of all the advantages to be gained from poetry that the effort is necessary. The soul gains no experience if it is always to reject that of which it has hitherto known nothing, that for which it has hitherto been unable to feel either sympathy or toleration. It is not easy to overestimate the loss to Shelley's and Blake's contemporaries brought about by their inability to study those poets sympathetically. Neglect, misunderstanding, intolerance—with these a generation may injure its poets. But in so doing, it will injure itself far more, trampling its own sustenance.

I pass on to another group of friends. It would be worth while to be clear as to what are minor and what are major poets, if only that we might be more secure against the dangers to which we are exposed from anthologists and the growing love of anthologies. The anthology was, in its origin, a collection of minor poems, a collection of memorable pieces from the works of minor poets—that is, of poets who are not themselves so memorable. It is very much to be regretted that this definition is no longer followed; a modern anthology is simply a selection. It professes either to give you a collection of all the best poetry, excluding only those poems which are too long for inclusion in a small volume, or it sets before you a collection of all the poems of a proper length which have been written upon a given subject, such as music or mountains or the British Navy or the domestic dog. The former is, of course, the book against which my warning is directed—the general selection. The reader of it is led to understand that he has before him in this small compass all the poetry which is really worth troubling about; all that is likely to give him pleasure. He learns, therefore, either to disregard the personality of the poets altogether, to treat them all as if they were very much upon an equality when they were at their best, or at least to believe that in these select pieces he has sufficient material for judging of even the greatest poets. The Temple of Fame has been by this means rebuilt upon a conveniently small scale, the niches in it being reserved, not for poets, but for single poems.

There are, then, from the purely poetical standpoint, anthologies good, bad, and indifferent. The bad anthology is that which is chosen on a bad principle, that which sets

out to be a collection of gems; the indifferent one is a mere work of reference on a special subject; the good anthology is that which is chosen on the right principle, that which professes to give the best poems of the minor poets—that is to say, the best poems of those poets who have produced from time to time good work, but have not embodied in it the whole of their personality, or have embodied in it only a personality of a simple nature and no great variety of experience or of mood. To these may well be added all those anonymous poems which cannot be attributed to any author known to us, including the contents of the Elizabethan Song-Books and other collections, and our ancient national ballads. But this is not the kind of anthology now popular. The anthology in general request is a labour-saving appliance, and the labour which it saves the reader is the trouble of making a real acquaintance with those poets who are best worth attention. It may be true that he who knows "The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna" knows all that is worth knowing of the Rev. Charles Wolfe; but it is idle to suppose that an acquaintance with "The Piper," and "Tiger, Tiger," and "The Little Black Boy," can really be to the reader anything but a partial and distant view of the spiritual form of Blake. Yet this belief is not only instinctively acquired by the innocent reader, and especially by the young, but it is the commonest thing in the world to see a partial acquaintance with great authors actually advocated by those who write upon literature. We are invited to pass by as regrettable, lamentable, deplorable, or negligible, passages vitally connected with the life and thought of our greatest poets, on the ground that they describe or refer to, or involve, interests or ideas which are contrary to the accepted moral code of our own day.

The theory involved in this is plain. It is that against which I have again and again protested. Poetry is looked upon from the outside as a product, not as an expression. The poet's object is supposed to be the production of "beautiful" things; the reader's object is to collect and enjoy such things. If the "beauty" is not present in the desired degree, or if there is mingled with it any admixture of elements which are thought undesirable for other reasons, the piece, however important, however expressive, however characteristic, is excluded from the collection. A

fragment of the poet's vesture is kept; he himself is exiled.

And now that I have described these friends of the poets, the scholar or historian, the antiquarian, the Horatian, the friend who promotes the poets from minor to major, and the friend who keeps all that he cares to know of them in one pocket volume—now that I have described and deplored them, what is the upshot of my complaint? What is the justification? Is there not room for more opinions than one about poetry? We may think that our friends hold mistaken views of art, but why should we not leave them to enjoy themselves in their own way?

There are two reasons. The first I have given already: the injury to poetry. Art must fail of its highest in a community where its nature is misunderstood and its activity under-valued and confined. The opinion of individuals here and there may be unimportant; a widespread error cannot be. But I say no more of this, because it is a reason which naturally appeals only to the converted. For the unbeliever I have a more practical argument. The prevalence of a low view of art, and especially of the poetic art, has been the chief cause of our present educational distresses.

Let me trace very briefly what has been happening. At a time still within living memory, a feeling arose that the old literary education—that is, the classical education of our public schools and universities—was no longer adequate. This was supposed to be due to a change in the demand: it was really due to a defect in the supply. Our age was thought to be a scientific age, as distinguished from the more literary, more poetic ages which preceded it. But in every age there are, and have always been, the same two activities of the human spirit, the scientific and the æsthetic, and in every age the only education which can deal adequately with life must cover them both. The great scholars of the Renaissance, with their passion for the rediscovered literature of Greece and Rome, would have been astonished to hear that the natural sciences were not their province. The advancement of learning, the discovery of Utopia, were the work of men who were blind neither of one eye nor of the other. But as time went on, the new learning fell from its high estate: it shrank from

life to literature, and, further still, from literature to language. It not only lost touch with the sciences, it became an affair of mere Greek and Latin; for the brilliant man a pair of lace ruffles, for the dull one a pair of grammatical dumb-bells.

Less than fifty years ago the first attempt was made to restore, at any rate, the possibility of a wider education. Science, modern languages, and modern history were introduced into the public school curriculum. The movement was at once misunderstood and misused; it was treated as a concession to commercialism, and there followed an outcry, of which we have not yet heard the last, demanding the substitution of technical training for education by the dead languages. The struggle continues, but it is going against the classics; Greek is in the last ditch, Latin is trembling at sight of the thin end of the wedge. The scholars are wailing to a hostile or indifferent public that information, however true and however useful, is not education.

They are right so far, but they do not go far enough. They do not offer the real alternative—the real education, based partly upon the sciences, but mainly upon literature, rightly so called and treated. Treated, that is, not as language, not as an ingenious set of symbols, or a graceful set of traditional gestures, but as the self-expression of great natures, the record and rekindling of spiritual experiences. Between life and words the connection is at times but slight; at times it ceases to exist or passes into an antagonism. But human life and poetry can never be separated; even the most material of facts are born of the human spirit and retain their hold upon it; an iceberg, a coal mine, a burning ship, exist for us only by our perception, and may be tests of our conduct or sparks to our emotion. Since we live in two worlds, how can any education serve us which does not take account of both?

There is one other point which cannot be passed over. The new teachers must treat literature in this process of education with not less respect than science. They must not only recognise it for what it is—no mere elegance or accomplishment, but the characteristic expression of life in high moments of intuition—they must deal with it whole and give no heed to the frivolous accusation of indecorum.

THE POETS AND THEIR FRIENDS

In art, as in science, there is neither decorous nor indecorous —there is only relevant or irrelevant. The sea-captain is not trained upon windless and open water, nor the physician upon the records of unfailing health. If the soul is to be its own captain and physician through life, it must learn to look upon the mistakes and disasters, even upon the disgraces, of human nature. The old education was never more futile than when it expurgated both the works of the classical poets and their lives: when it classed them all together as purveyors of gems, and left their pupils to stumble by themselves upon the vice of Catullus, the morbidity of Propertius, the cynical materialism of Ovid, the brutality of Martial, and the essential banality of Horace. The real Roman poet—how little they knew him, or how little they told of him! And now that a greater poetry is available, and the life-history of more intelligible souls—is the opportunity to be lost once more? If so, the fault will lie once more not with the poets, but with their friends.

The World Set Free

A Story of Mankind

By H. G. Wells

CHAPTER THE THIRD

The Ending of War

§ 7.

The Slavic fox stood upon a metal balcony in his picturesque Art-Nouveau palace that gave upon the precipice that overhung his bright little capital, and beside him stood Pestovitch, grizzled and cunning and now full of an ill-suppressed excitement. Behind them the window opened into a large room richly decorated in aluminium and crimson enamel, across which the king, as he glanced ever and again over his shoulder with a gesture of inquiry, could see through the two open doors of a little azure-walled antechamber the wireless operator in the turret working at his incessant transcription. Two pompously uniformed messengers waited listlessly in this apartment. The room was furnished with a stately dignity, and had in the middle of it a big green baize-covered table with the massive white metal inkpots and antiquated sand-boxes natural to a new but romantic monarchy. It was the king's council chamber, and about it now, in attitudes of suspended intrigue, stood the half dozen ministers who constituted his cabinet. They had been summoned for twelve o'clock, but still at half-past twelve the king loitered in the balcony and seemed to be waiting for some news that did not come.

The king and his minister had talked at first in whispers; they had fallen silent, for they found little now to express except a vague anxiety. Away there on the mountain side were the white metal roofs of the long farm buildings,

beneath which the bomb factory and the bombs were hidden. (The chemist who had made all these for the king had died suddenly after the declaration of Brissago.) Nobody knew of that store of mischief now but the king and his adviser and three heavily faithful attendants; the aviators who waited now in the midday blaze with their bomb-carrying machines and their passenger bomb-throwers in the exercising grounds of the motor-cyclist barracks below were still in ignorance of the position of the ammunition they were presently to take up. It was time they started if the scheme was to work as Pestovitch had planned it. It was a magnificent plan. It aimed at no less than the Empire of the World. The government of idealists and professors away there at Brissago was to be blown to fragments, and then east, west, north and south those aeroplanes would go swarming over a world that had disarmed itself, to proclaim Ferdinand Charles, the new Caesar, the Master, Lord of the Earth.

It was a magnificent plan. But the tension of this waiting for news of the success of the first blow was—considerable.

The Slavic fox was of a pallid fairness, he had a remarkably long nose, a thick, short moustache, and small blue eyes that were a little too near together to be pleasant. It was his habit to worry his moustache with short, nervous tugs whenever his restless mind troubled him, and now this motion was becoming so incessant that it irked Pestovitch beyond the limits of endurance.

"I will go," said the minister, "and see what the trouble is with the wireless. They give us nothing, good or bad."

Left to himself, the king could worry his moustache without stint; he leant his elbows forward on the balcony and gave both of his long white hands to the work, so that he looked like a pale dog gnawing a bone. Suppose they caught his men, what should he do? Suppose they caught his men?

The clocks in the light, gold-capped belfries of the town below presently intimated the half-hour after midday.

Of course, he and Pestovitch had thought it out. Even if they had caught those men, they were pledged to secrecy. . . . Probably they would be killed in the catching. . . . One could deny anyhow, deny and deny.

And then he became aware of half a dozen little shining specks very high in the blue. . . .

Pestovitch came out to him presently. "The government messages, Sire, have all dropped into cypher," he said. "I have set a man——"

"*Look!*" interrupted the king, and pointed upward with a long, lean finger.

Pestovitch followed that indication and then glanced for one questioning moment at the white face before him.

"We have to face it out, Sire," he said.

For some moments they watched the steep spirals of the descending messengers, and then they began a hasty consultation. . . .

They decided that to be holding a council upon the details of an ultimate surrender to Brissago was as innocent-looking a thing as the king could well be doing, and so when at last the ex-king Egbert, whom the council had sent as its envoy, arrived upon the scene, he discovered the king almost theatrically posed at the head of his councillors in the midst of his court. The door upon the wireless operators was shut.

The ex-king from Brissago came like a draught through the curtains and attendants that gave a wide margin to King Ferdinand's state, and the familiar confidence of his manner belied a certain hardness in his eye. Firmin trotted behind him and no one else was with him. And as Ferdinand Charles rose to greet him, there came into the heart of the Balkan king again that same chilly feeling that he had felt upon the balcony—and it passed at the careless gestures of his guest. For surely anyone might outwit this foolish talker who, for a mere idea and at the command of a little French rationalist in spectacles, had thrown away the most ancient crown in all the world.

One must deny, deny. . . .

And then slowly and quite tiresomely he realised that there was nothing to deny. His visitor, with an amiable ease, went on talking about everything in debate between himself and Brissago, except——.

Could it be that they had been delayed? Could it be that they had had to drop for repairs and were still uncaptured? Could it be that even now while this fool

babbled, they were over there among the mountains heaving their deadly charge over the side of the aeroplane?

Strange hopes began to lift the tail of the Slavic fox again

What was the man saying? One must talk to him anyhow until one knew. At any moment the little brass door behind him might open with the news of Brissago blown to atoms. Then it would be a delightful relief to the present tension to arrest this chatterer forthwith. He might be killed perhaps. What?

The king was repeating his observation. "They have a ridiculous fancy that your confidence is based on the possession of atomic bombs."

King Ferdinand Charles pulled himself together. He protested.

"Oh, quite so," said the ex-king, "quite so."

"What grounds?"

The ex-king permitted himself a gesture and the ghost of a chuckle—why the devil should he chuckle? "Practically none," he said. "But, of course, with these things one has to be so careful."

And then again for an instant something—like the faintest shadow of derision—gleamed out of the envoy's eyes and recalled that chilly feeling to King Ferdinand's spine.

Some kindred depression had come to Pestovitch, who had been watching the drawn intensity of Firmin's face. He came to the help of his master, who, he feared, might protest too much.

"A search!" cried the king. "An embargo on our aeroplanes!"

"Only as a temporary expedient," said the ex-king Egbert, "while the search is going on."

The king appealed to his council.

"The people will never permit it, Sire," said a bustling little man in a gorgeous uniform.

"You'll have to make 'em," said the ex-king, genially addressing all the councillors.

King Ferdinand glanced at the closed brass door through which no news would come.

"When would you want to have this search?"

The ex-king was radiant. "We couldn't possibly do it until the day after to-morrow," he said.

"Just the capital?"

"Where else?" asked the ex-king still more cheerfully.

"For my own part," said the ex-king, confidentially, "I think the whole business ridiculous. Who would be such a fool as to hide atomic bombs? Nobody. Certain hanging if he's caught,—certain, and almost certain blowing up if he isn't. But nowadays I have to take orders like the rest of the world. And here I am."

The king thought he had never met such detestable geniality. He glanced at Pestovitch, who nodded almost imperceptibly. It was well, anyhow, to have a fool to deal with. They might have sent a diplomatist. "Of course," said the king, "I recognise the overpowering force—and a kind of logic—in these orders from Brissago."

"I knew you would," said the ex-king with an air of relief, "and so let us arrange——"

They arranged with a certain informality. No Balkan aeroplane was to adventure into the air until the search was concluded, and meanwhile the fleets of the world-government would soar and circle in the sky. The towns were to be placarded with offers of reward to anyone who would help in the discovery of atomic bombs. . . .

"You will sign that," said the ex-king.

"Why?"

"To show that we aren't in any way hostile to you."

Pestovitch nodded "yes" to his master.

"And then you see," said the ex-king in that easy way of his, "we'll have a lot of men here, borrow help from your police and run through all your things. And then everything will be over. Meanwhile, if I may be your guest—. . . ."

When presently Pestovitch was alone with the king again, he found him in a state of jangling emotions. His spirit was tossing like a wind-whipped sea. One moment he was exalted and full of contempt for "that ass" and his search; the next he was down in a pit of dread. "They will find them, Pestovitch, and then he'll hang us."

"Hang us?"

The king put his long nose into his councillor's face. "That grinning brute *wants* to hang us," he said. "And

hang us he will. If we give him a shadow of a chance."

"But all their Modern State civilisation!"

"Do you think there's any pity in that crew of Godless, Vivisecting Prigs?" cried this last king of romance. "Do you think, Pestovitch, they understand anything of a high ambition or a splendid dream? Do you think that our gallant and sublime adventure has any appeal to them? Here am I, the last and greatest and most romantic of the Caesars, and do you think they will miss the chance of hanging me like a dog if they can, killing me like a rat in a hole? And that renegade! He who was once an anointed king! . . ."

"I hate that sort of eye that laughs and keeps hard," said the king.

"I won't sit still here and be caught like a fascinated rabbit," said the king in conclusion. "We must shift those bombs."

"Risk it," said Pestovitch. "Leave them alone."

"No," said the king. "Shift them near the frontier. Then while they watch us here—they will always watch us here now—we can buy an aeroplane abroad, and pick them up. . . ."

The king was in a feverish, irritable mood all that evening, but he made his plans nevertheless with infinite cunning. They must get the bombs away; there must be a couple of atomic hay lorries, the bombs could be hidden under the hay. . . . Pestovitch went and came, instructing trusty servants, planning and replanning. . . . The king and the ex-king dined together, and the ex-king talked very pleasantly of a number of subjects. All the while at the back of King Ferdinand Charles's mind fretted the mystery of his vanished aeroplane. There came no news of its capture and no news of its success. At any moment all that power at the back of his visitor might crumble away and vanish. . . .

It was past midnight when the king in a cloak and slouch hat that might equally have served a small farmer or any respectable middle-class man, slipped out from an inconspicuous service gate on the eastward side of his palace into the thickly wooded gardens that sloped in a series of terraces down to the town. Pestovitch and his

guard-valet Peter, both wrapped about in a similar disguise, came out among the laurels that bordered the pathway and joined him. It was a clear, warm night, but the stars seemed unusually little and remote because of the aeroplanes, each trailing a searchlight, that drove hither and thither across the blue. One great beam had seemed to rest on the king for a moment as he came out of the palace; then instantly and reassuringly it had swept away. But while they were still in the palace gardens another found them and looked at them.

"They see us," cried the king.

"They make nothing of us," said Pestovitch.

The king glanced up and met a calm round eye of light, that seemed to wink at him and vanish, leaving him blinded. . . .

The three men went on their way. Near the little gate in the garden railings that Pestovitch had caused to be unlocked, the king paused under the shadow of an ilex and looked back at the palace. It was very high and narrow, a twentieth-century rendering of mediævalism, mediævalism in steel and bronze and sham stone and opaque glass. Against the sky it splashed a confusion of pinnacles. High up in the eastward wing were the windows of the apartments of the ex-king Egbert. One of them was brightly lit now, and against the light a little black figure stood very still and looked out upon the night.

The king snarled.

"He little knows how we slip through his fingers," said Pestovitch.

And as he spoke they saw the ex-king stretch out his arms slowly like one who yawns, knuckle his eyes and turn inward—no doubt to his bed.

Down through the ancient winding back streets of his capital hurried the king, and at an appointed corner a shabby atomi-automobile waited for the three. It was a hackney-carriage of the lowest grade, with dinted metal panels and deflated cushions. The driver was one of the ordinary drivers of the capital, but beside him sat the young secretary of Pestovitch, who knew the way to the farm where the bombs were hidden.

The automobile made its way through the narrow streets of the old town, which were still lit and uneasy—for the

fleet of airships overhead had kept the cafés open and people abroad—over the great new bridge, and so by straggling outskirts to the country. And all through his capital the king who hoped to outdo Caesar sat back and was very still, and no one spoke. And as they got out into the dark country they became aware of the searchlights wandering over the countryside like the uneasy ghosts of giants. The king sat forward and looked at these flitting whitenesses, and every now and then peered up to see the flying ships overhead.

"I don't like them," said the king.

Presently one of these patches of moonlight came to rest about them and seemed to be following their automobile. The king drew back.

"The things are confoundedly noiseless," said the king. "It's like being stalked by lean white cats."

He peered again. "That fellow is watching us," he said.

And then suddenly he gave way to panic. "Pestovitch," he said, clutching his minister's arm, "they are watching us. I'm not going through with this. They are watching us. I'm going back."

Pestovitch remonstrated. "Tell him to go back," said the king and tried to open the window. For a few moments there was a grim struggle in the automobile; a gripping of wrists and a blow. "I can't go through with it," repeated the king, "I can't go through with it."

"But they'll hang us," said Pestovitch.

"Not if we were to give up now. Not if we were to surrender the bombs. It is you who brought me into this. . . ."

At last Pestovitch compromised. There was an inn perhaps half a mile from the farm. They could alight there and the king could get brandy. And rest his nerves for a time. And if he still thought fit to go back he could go back. "See," said Pestovitch, "the light has gone again."

The king peered up. "I believe he's following us without a light," said the king.

In the little old dirty inn the king hung doubtful for a time and was for going back and throwing himself on the mercy of the council. "If there *is* a council," said

Pestovitch. "By this time your bombs may have settled it."

"But if so, these infernal aeroplanes would go."

"They may not know yet."

"But, Pestovitch, why couldn't you do all this without me?"

Pestovitch made no answer for a moment. "I was for leaving the bombs in their place," he said at last and went to the window. About their conveyance shone a circle of bright light. Pestovitch had a brilliant idea. "I will send my secretary out to make a kind of dispute with the driver. Something that will make them watch up above there. Meanwhile you and I and Peter will go out by the back way and up by the hedges to the farm. . . ."

It was worthy of his subtle reputation, and it answered passing well.

In ten minutes they were tumbling over the wall of the farmyard, wet, muddy and breathless, but unobserved. But as they ran towards the barns, the king gave vent to something between a groan and a curse, and all about them shone the light—and passed.

But had it passed at once or lingered for just a second?

"They didn't see us," said Peter.

"I don't think they saw us," said the king, and stared as the light went swooping up the mountain-side, hung for a second about a hayrick and then came pouring back.

"Into the barn!" cried the king.

He bruised his shin against something, and then all three men were inside the huge steel-girdered barn in which stood the two motor hay-lorries that were to take the bombs away. Kurt and Abel, the two brothers of Peter, had brought the lorries thither in daylight. They had the upper half of the loads of hay thrown off, ready to cover the bombs, so soon as the king should show the hiding place. "There's a sort of pit here," said the king. "Don't light another lantern. This key of mine releases a ring. . . ."

For a time scarcely a word was spoken in the darkness of the barn. There was the sound of a slab being lifted and then of feet descending the ladder into a pit. Then whispering and then heavy breathing as Kurt came struggling up with the first of the hidden bombs.

"We shall do it yet," said the king. And then he gasped.

"Curse that light. Why in the name of heaven didn't we shut the barn door?" For the great door stood wide open and all the empty, lifeless yard outside and the door and six feet of the floor of the barn were in the blue glare of an inquiring searchlight.

"Shut the door, Peter," said Pestovitch.

"No!" cried the king too late, as Peter went forward into the light. "Don't show yourself!" cried the king. Kurt made a step forward and plucked his brother back. For a time all five men stood still. It seemed that light would never go, and then abruptly it was turned off, leaving them blinded. "Now," said the king uneasily, "now shut the door."

"Not completely," cried Pestovitch. "Leave a chink for us to go out by. . . ."

It was hot work shifting those bombs, and the king worked for a time like a common man. Kurt and Abel carried the great things up, and Peter brought them to the carts, and the king and Pestovitch helped him to place them among the hay. They made as little noise as they could. . . .

"Ssh!" cried the king. "What's that?"

But Kurt and Abel did not hear, and came blundering up the ladder with the last of the load.

"Ssh!" Peter ran forward to them with a whispered remonstrance. Now they were still.

The barn door opened a little wider, and against the dim blue light outside they saw the black shape of a man.

"Anyone here?" he asked, speaking with an Italian accent.

The king broke into a cold perspiration. Then Pestovitch answered. "Only a poor farmer loading hay," he said, and picked up a huge hay fork and went forward softly.

"You load your hay at a very bad time and in a very bad light," said the man at the door, peering in. "Have you no electric light here?"

Then suddenly he turned on an electric torch, and as he did so Pestovitch sprang forward. "Get out of my barn!" he cried and drove the fork full at the intruder's chest. He had a vague idea that so he might stab the man to silence. But the man shouted loudly as the prongs

pierced him and drove him backward, and instantly there was a sound of feet running across the yard.

"Bombs!" cried the man upon the ground, struggling with the prongs in his hand, and as Pestovitch staggered forward into view with the force of his own thrust, he was shot through the body by one of the two newcomers.

The man on the ground was badly hurt but plucky. "Bombs!" he repeated, and struggled up into a kneeling position and held his electric torch full upon the face of the king. "Shoot them!" he cried, coughing and spitting blood, so that the halo of light round the king's head danced about.

For a moment in that shivering circle of light the two men saw the king kneeling up in the cart and Peter on the barn floor beside him. The old fox looked at them sideways—snared, a white-faced evil thing. And then as, with a faltering suicidal heroism, he leant forward over the bomb before him, they fired together and shot him through the head.

The upper part of his face seemed to vanish.

"Shoot them!" cried the man who had been stabbed. "Shoot them all!"

And then his light went out, and he rolled over with a groan at the feet of his comrades.

But each carried a light of his own, and in another moment everything in the barn was visible again. They shot Peter even as he held up his hands in sign of surrender.

Kurt and Abel at the head of the ladder hesitated for a moment and then plunged backward into the pit. "If we don't kill them," said one of the sharpshooters, "they'll blow us to rags. They've gone down that hatchway. Come! . . .

"Here they are. Hands up, I say! Hold your light while I shoot. . . ."

§ 8.

It was still quite dark when his valet and Firmin came together and told the ex-king Egbert that the business was settled.

He started up into a sitting position on the side of his bed.

"Did he go out?" asked the ex-king.

"He is dead," said Firmin. "He was shot."

The ex-king reflected. "That's about the best thing that could have happened," he said. "Where are the bombs? In that farmhouse on the opposite hillside! Why, the place is in sight! Let us go. I'll dress. Is there anyone in the place, Firmin, to get us a cup of coffee?"

Through the hungry twilight of the dawn the ex-king's automobile carried him to the farmhouse, where the last rebel king was lying among his bombs. The rim of the sky flashed, the east grew bright, and the sun was just rising over the hills when King Egbert reached the farmyard. There he found the hay-lorries drawn out from the barn with the dreadful bombs still packed upon them. A couple of score of aviators held the yard, and outside a few peasants stood in a little group and stared, ignorant as yet of what had happened. Against the stone wall of the farmyard five bodies were lying neatly side by side, and Pestovitch had an expression of surprise on his face, and the king was chiefly identifiable by his long white hands and his blonde moustache. The wounded aeronaut had been carried down to the inn. And after the ex-king had given directions in what manner the bombs were to be taken to the new special laboratories above Zurich, where they could be unpacked in an atmosphere of chlorine, he turned to these five still shapes.

Their five pairs of feet stuck out with a curious stiff unanimity. . . .

"What else was there to do?" he said in answer to some internal protest.

"I wonder, Firmin, if there are any more of them?"

"Bombs, sir?" asked Firmin.

"No, such kings. . . ."

"The pitiful folly of it!" said the ex-king, following his thought. "Firmin, as an ex-professor of International Politics, I think it falls to you to bury them. There? . . . No, don't put them near the well. People will have to drink from that well. Bury them over there, some way off, in the field."

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

The New Phase.

§ 1.

The task that lay before the Assembly of Brissago, viewed, as we may view it now, from the clarifying standpoint of things accomplished, was in its broad issues a simple one. Essentially it was to place social organisation upon the new footing that the swift, accelerated advance of human knowledge had rendered necessary. The council was gathered together with the haste of a salvage expedition, and it was confronted with wreckage; but the wreckage was irreparable wreckage, and the only possibilities of the case were either the relapse of mankind to the agricultural barbarism from which it had emerged so painfully or the acceptance of achieved science as the basis of a new social order. The old tendencies of human nature, suspicion, jealousy, particularism and belligerency, were incompatible with the monstrous destructive power of the new appliances the inhuman logic of science had produced. The equilibrium could be restored only by civilisation destroying itself down to a level at which modern apparatus could no longer be produced, or by human nature adapting itself and its institutions to the new conditions. It was for the latter alternative that the assembly existed.

Sooner or later this choice would have confronted mankind. The sudden development of atomic science did but precipitate and render rapid and dramatic a clash between the new and the customary that had been gathering since the first flint was chipped or the first fire built together. From the day when man contrived himself a tool and suffered another male to draw near him, he ceased to be altogether a thing of instinct and untroubled convictions. From that day forth a widening breach can be traced between his egotistical passions and the social need. Slowly he adapted himself to the life of the homestead, and his passionate impulses widened out to the demands of the clan and the tribe. But widen though his impulses might, the latent hunter and wanderer and wonderer in his imagination outstripped their development. He was never

quite subdued to the soil, nor quite tamed to the home. Everywhere it needed teaching and the priest to keep him within the bounds of the plough-life and the beast-tending. Slowly a vast system of traditional imperatives superposed itself upon his instincts, imperatives that were admirably fitted to make him that cultivator, that cattle-minder, who was for twice ten thousand years the normal man.

And, unpremeditated, undesired, out of the accumulations of his tilling came civilisation. Civilisation was the agricultural surplus. It appeared as trade and tracks and roads, it pushed boats out upon the rivers and presently invaded the seas, and within its primitive courts, within temples grown rich and leisurely and amidst the gathering medley of the seaport towns rose speculation and philosophy and science and the beginning of the new order that has at last established itself as human life. Slowly at first as we traced it, and then with an accumulating velocity, the new powers were fabricated. Man as a whole did not seek them nor desire them; they were thrust into his hand. For a time men took up and used these new things and the new powers inadvertently as they came to him, recking nothing of the consequences. For endless generations change led him very gently. But when he had been led far enough change quickened the pace. It was with a series of shocks that he realised at last that he was living the old life less and less and a new life more and more.

Already before the release of atomic energy the tensions between the old way of living and the new were intense. They were far intenser than they had been even at the collapse of the Roman imperial system. On the one hand was the ancient life of the family and the small community and the petty industry, on the other was a new life on a larger scale with remoter horizons and a strange sense of purpose. Already it was growing clear that men must live on one side or the other. One could not have little tradespeople and syndicated businesses in the same market, sleeping carters and motor trolleys on the same road, bows and arrows and aeroplane sharpshooters in the same army, or illiterate peasant industries and power-driven factories in the same world. And still less was it possible that one could have the ideas and ambitions and greed and jealousy of peasants equipped with the vast appliances of the new

age. If there had been no atomic bombs to bring together most of the directing intelligence of the world to that hasty conference at Brissago, there would still have been, extended over great areas and a considerable space of time perhaps, a less formal conference of responsible and understanding people upon the perplexities of this world-wide opposition. If the work of Holsten had been spread over centuries and imparted to the world by imperceptible degrees, it would nevertheless have made it necessary for men to take counsel upon and set a plan for the future. Indeed, already there had been accumulating for a hundred years before the crisis a literature of foresight; there was a whole mass of "Modern State" scheming available for the conference to go upon. These bombs did but accentuate and dramatise an already developing problem.

§ 2.

This assembly was no leap of exceptional minds and super-intelligences into the control of affairs. It was teachable, its members trailed ideas with them to the gathering, but these were the consequences of the "moral shock" the bombs had given humanity, and there is no reason for supposing its individual personalities were greatly above the average. It would be possible to cite a thousand instances of error and inefficiency in its proceedings due to the forgetfulness, irritability or fatigue of its members. It experimented considerably and blundered often. Excepting Holsten, whose gift was highly specialised, it is questionable whether there was a single man of the first order of human quality in the gathering. But it had a modest fear of itself and a consequent directness that gave it a general distinction. There was, of course, a noble simplicity about Leblanc, but even of him it may be asked whether he was not rather good and honest-minded than in the fuller sense great.

The ex-king had wisdom and a certain romantic dash, he was a man among thousands, even if he was not a man among millions, but his memoirs and, indeed, his decision to write memoirs, give the quality of himself and his associates. The book makes admirable but astonishing reading. Therein he takes the great work the council was doing

for granted, as a little child takes God. It is as if he had no sense of it at all. He tells amusing trivialities about his cousin Wilhelm and his secretary, Firmin, he pokes fun at the American president, who was indeed rather a little accident of the political machine than a representative American, and he gives a long description of how he was lost for three days in the mountains in the company of the only Japanese member, a loss that seems to have caused no serious interruption of the work of the council. . . .

The Brissago conference has been written about time after time as though it were a gathering of the very flower of humanity. Perched up there by the freak or wisdom of Leblanc, it had a certain Olympian quality, and the natural tendency of the human mind to elaborate such a resemblance would have us give its members the likenesses of Gods. It would be equally reasonable to compare it to one of those enforced meetings upon the mountain tops that must have occurred in the opening phases of the Deluge. The strength of the council lay not in itself, but in the circumstances that had quickened its intelligence. dispelled its vanities, and emancipated it from traditional ambitions and antagonisms. It was stripped of the accumulations of centuries, a naked government with all that freedom of action that nakedness affords. And its problems were set before it with a plainness that was out of all comparison with the complicated and perplexing intimations of the former time.

§ 3.

The world on which the council looked did indeed present a task quite sufficiently immense and altogether too urgent for any wanton indulgence in internal dissension. It may be interesting to sketch in a few phrases the condition of mankind at the close of the period of warring States, in the year of crisis that followed the release of atomic power. It was a world extraordinarily limited when one measures it by later standards, and it was now in a state of the direst confusion and distress.

It must be remembered that at this time men had still to spread into enormous areas of the land surface of the globe. There were vast mountain wildernesses, forest

wildernesses, sandy deserts, and frozen lands. Men still clung closely to water and arable soil in temperate or sub-tropical climates, they lived abundantly only in river valleys, and all their great cities had grown upon large navigable rivers or close to ports upon the sea. Over great areas even of this suitable land flies and mosquitoes, armed with infection, had so far defeated human invasion, and under their protection the virgin forests remained untouched. Indeed, the whole world, even in its most crowded districts, was filthy with flies and swarming with needless insect life to an extent which is now almost incredible. A population map of the world in 1950 would have followed sea shore and river course so closely in its darker shading as to give an impression that *homo sapiens* was an amphibious animal. His roads and railways lay also along the lower contours, only here and there to pierce some mountain barrier or reach some holiday resort did they clamber above 3,000 feet. And across the ocean his traffic passed in definite lines; there were hundreds of thousands of square miles of ocean no ship ever traversed except by mischance.

Into the mysteries of the solid globe under his feet he had not yet pierced for five miles, and it was still not forty years since, with a tragic pertinacity, he had clambered to the poles of the earth. The limitless mineral wealth of the Arctic and Antarctic circles was still buried beneath vast accumulations of immemorial ice, and the secret riches of the inner zones of the crust were untapped and, indeed, unsuspected. The higher mountain regions were known only to a sprinkling of guide-led climbers and the frequenters of a few gaunt hotels, and the vast rainless belts of land that lay across the continental masses, from Gobi to Sahara and along the backbone of America, with their perfect air, their daily baths of blazing sunshine, their nights of cool serenity and glowing stars, and their reservoirs of deep-lying water, were as yet only desolations of fear and death to the common imagination.

And now, under the shock of the atomic bombs, the great masses of population which had gathered into the enormous, dingy town centres of that period were dispossessed and scattered disastrously over the surrounding rural areas. It was as if some brutal force, grown im-

patient at last at man's blindness, had with the deliberate intention of a rearrangement of population upon more wholesome lines, shaken the world. The great industrial regions and the large cities that had escaped the bombs were, because of their complete economic collapse, in almost as tragic a plight as those that blazed, and the countryside was disordered by a multitude of wandering and lawless strangers. In some parts of the world famine raged, and in many regions there was plague. . . . The plains of north India, which had become more and more dependent for the general welfare on the railways and that great system of irrigation canals which the malignant section of the patriots had destroyed, were in a state of peculiar distress; whole villages lay dead together, no man heeding, and the very tigers and panthers that preyed upon the emaciated survivors crawled back infected into the jungle to perish. Large areas of China were a prey to brigand bands. . . .

It is a remarkable thing that no complete contemporary account of the explosion of the atomic bombs survives. There are, of course, innumerable allusions and partial records, and it is from these that subsequent ages must piece together the image of these devastations.

The phenomena, it must be remembered, changed greatly from day to day, and even from hour to hour, as the exploding bomb shifted its position, threw off fragments or came into contact with water or a fresh texture of soil. Barnet, who came within forty miles of Paris early in October, is concerned chiefly with his account of the social confusion of the countryside and the problems of his command, but he speaks of heaped cloud masses of steam "all along the sky to the south-west" and of a red glare beneath these at night. Parts of Paris were still burning, and numbers of people were camped in the fields even at this distance watching over treasured heaps of salvaged loot. He speaks, too, of the distant rumbling of the explosion—"like trains going over iron bridges."

Other descriptions agree with this; they all speak of the "continuous reverberations" or of the "thudding and hammering," or some such phrase; and they all testify to a huge pall of steam, from which rain would fall suddenly in torrents and amidst which lightning played. Drawing nearer to Paris, an observer would have found the salvage

camps increasing in number and blocking up the villages, and large numbers of people, often starving and ailing, camping under improvised tents because there was no place for them to go. The sky became more and more densely overcast until at last it blotted out the light of day and left nothing but a dull red glare "extraordinarily depressing to the spirit." In this dull glare, great numbers of people were still living, clinging to their houses and in many cases subsisting in a state of partial famine upon the produce in their gardens and the stores in the shops of the provision dealers.

Coming in still closer, the investigator would have reached the police cordon, which was trying to check the desperate enterprise of those who would return to their homes or rescue their more valuable possessions within the "zone of imminent danger."

That zone was rather arbitrarily defined. If our spectator could have got permission to enter it, he would have entered also a zone of uproar, a zone of perpetual thunderings, lit by a strange purplish-red light, and quivering and swaying with the incessant explosion of the radio-active substance. Whole blocks of buildings were alight and burning fiercely, the trembling, ragged flames looking pale and ghastly and attenuated in comparison with the full-bodied crimson glare beyond. The shells of other edifices already burnt rose pierced by rows of window sockets against the red-lit mist.

Every step further would have been as dangerous as a descent within the crater of an active volcano. These spinning, boiling bomb centres would shift and break unexpectedly into new regions, great fragments of earth or drain or masonry suddenly caught by a jet of disruptive force might come flying by the explorer's head, or the ground yawn a fiery grave beneath his feet. Few who ventured into these areas of destruction and survived attempted any repetition of their experiences. There are stories of puffs of luminous, radio-active vapour drifting sometimes scores of miles from the bomb centre and killing and scorching all they overtook. And the first conflagrations from the Paris centre spread westward half way to the sea.

Moreover, the air in this infernal inner circle of red-lit

ruins had a peculiar dryness and a blistering quality, so that it set up a soreness of the skin and lungs that was very difficult to heal. . . .

Such was the last state of Paris, and such on a larger scale was the condition of affairs in Chicago, and the same fate had overtaken Berlin, Moscow, Tokio, the eastern half of London, Toulon, Kiel, and two hundred and eighteen other centres of population or armament. Each was a flaming centre of radiant destruction that only time could quench, that indeed in many instances time has still to quench. To this day, though indeed with a constantly diminishing uproar and vigour, these explosions continue. In the map of nearly every country of the world three or four or more red circles, a score of miles in diameter, mark the position of the dying atomic bombs and the death areas that men have been forced to abandon around them. Within these areas perished museums, cathedrals, palaces, libraries, galleries of masterpieces, and a vast accumulation of human achievement, whose charred remains lie buried, a legacy of curious material that only future generations may hope to examine. . . .

§ 4.

The state of mind of the dispossessed urban population which swarmed and perished so abundantly over the countryside during the dark days of the autumnal months that followed the Last War, was one of blank despair. Barnet gives sketch after sketch of groups of these people, camped among the vineyards of Champagne, as he saw them during his period of service with the army of pacification.

There was, for example, that "man-milliner" who came out from a field beside the road that rises up eastward out of Epernay, and asked how things were going in Paris. He was, says Barnet, a round-faced man dressed very neatly in black—so neatly that it was amazing to discover he was living close at hand in a tent made of carpets—and he had "an urbane but insistent manner," a carefully trimmed moustache and beard, expressive eyebrows, and hair very neatly brushed.

"No one goes into Paris," said Barnet.

"But, Monsieur, that is very unenterprising," the man by the wayside submitted.

"The danger is too great. The radiations eat into people's skins."

The eyebrows protested. "But is nothing to be done?"

"Nothing can be done."

"But, Monsieur, it is extraordinarily inconvenient, this living in exile and waiting. My wife and my little boy suffer extremely. There is a lack of amenity. And the season advances. I say nothing of the expense and difficulty in obtaining provisions. . . . When does Monsieur think that something will be done to render Paris—possible?"

Barnet considered his interlocutor.

"I'm told," said Barnet, "that Paris is not likely to be possible again for several generations."

"Oh! but this is preposterous! Consider, Monsieur! What are people like ourselves to do in the meanwhile? I am a costumier. All my connections and interests, above all my style, demand Paris. . . ."

Barnet considered the sky, from which a light rain was beginning to fall, the wide fields about them from which the harvest had been taken, the trimmed poplars by the wayside.

"Naturally," he agreed, "you want to go to Paris. But Paris is over."

"Over!"

"Finished."

"But then, Monsieur—what is to become—of *me*?"

Barnet turned his face westward, whither the white road led.

"Where else, for example, may I hope to find—opportunity?"

Barnet made no reply.

"Perhaps on the Riviera. Or at some such place as Homburg. Or some plage perhaps."

"All that," said Barnet, accepting for the first time facts that had lain evident in his mind for weeks; "all that must be over too."

There was a pause. Then the voice beside him broke out: "But, Monsieur, it is impossible! It leaves—nothing."

"No. Not very much."

"One cannot suddenly begin to grow potatoes!"

"It would be good if Monsieur could bring himself—"

"To the life of a peasant! And my wife—— You do not know the distinguished delicacy of my wife, a refined helplessness, a peculiar dependent charm. Like some slender tropical creeper—with great white flowers. . . . But all this is foolish talk. It is impossible that Paris, which has survived so many misfortunes, should not presently revive."

"I do not think it will ever revive. Paris is finished. London, too, I am told—Berlin. All the great capitals were stricken. . . ."

"But—! Monsieur must permit me to differ."

"It is so."

"It is impossible. Civilisations do not end in this manner. Mankind will insist."

"On Paris?"

"On Paris."

"Monsieur, you might as well hope to go down the Maelstrom and resume business there."

"I am content, Monsieur, with my own faith."

"The winter comes on. Would not Monsieur be wiser to seek a house?"

"Further from Paris? No, Monsieur. But it is not possible, Monsieur, what you say, and you are under a tremendous mistake. . . . Indeed, you are in error. . . . I asked merely for information. . . ."

"When last I saw him," said Barnet, "he was standing under the signpost at the crest of the hill, gazing wistfully, yet it seemed to me a little doubtfully now, towards Paris, and altogether heedless of a drizzling rain that was wetting him through and through. . . ."

§ 5.

This effect of chill dismay, of a doom as yet imperfectly apprehended, deepens as Barnet's record passes on to tell of the approach of winter. It was too much for the great mass of those unwilling and incompetent nomads to realise that an age had ended, that the old help and guidance existed no longer, that times would not mend

again, however patiently they held out. They were still in many cases looking to Paris when the first snowflakes of that pitiless January came swirling about them. The story grows grimmer. . . .

If it is less monstrously tragic after Barnet's return to England it is, if anything, harder. England was a spectacle of fear-embittered householders, hiding food, crushing out robbery, driving the starving wanderers from every faltering place upon the roads, lest they should die inconveniently and reproachfully on the doorsteps of those who had failed to urge them onward. . . .

The remnants of the British troops left France finally in March, after urgent representations from the provisional government at Orleans that they could be supported no longer. They seem to have been a fairly well-behaved but highly parasitic force throughout, though Barnet is clearly of opinion that they did much to suppress sporadic brigandage and maintain social order. He came home to a famine-stricken country, and his picture of the England of that spring is one of miserable patience and desperate expedients. The country was suffering much more than France because of the cessation of the oversea supplies on which it had hitherto relied. His troops were given bread, dried fish, and boiled nettles at Dover, and marched inland to Ashford and paid off. On the way thither they saw four men hanging from the telegraph posts by the roadside, who had been hanged for stealing swedes. The labour refuges of Kent, he discovered, were feeding their crowds of casual wanderers on bread into which clay and sawdust had been mixed. In Surrey there was a shortage of even such fare as that. He himself struck across country to Winchester, fearing to approach the bomb-poisoned district round London, and at Winchester he had the luck to be taken on as one of the wireless assistants at the central station and given regular rations. The station stood in a commanding position on the chalk hill that overlooks the town from the east. . . .

Thence he must have assisted in the transmission of the endless cypher messages that preceded the gathering at Brissago, and there it was that the Brissago proclamation of the end of the war and the establishment of a world government came under his hands.

He was feeling ill and apathetic that day, and he did not realise what it was he was transcribing. He did it mechanically as a part of his tedious duty.

Afterwards there came a rush of messages arising out of the declaration that strained him very much, and in the evening, when he was relieved, he ate his scanty supper and then went out upon the little balcony before the station to smoke and rest his brains after his sudden and as yet inexplicable press of duty. It was a very beautiful still evening. He fell talking to a fellow operator, and for the first time, he declares, "I began to understand what it was all about. I began to see just what enormous issues had been under my hands for the past four hours. But I became incredulous after my first stimulation. 'This is some sort of Bunkum,' I said very sagely.

"My colleague was more hopeful. 'It means an end to bomb-throwing and destruction,' he said. 'It means that presently corn will come from America.'

"'Who is going to send corn when there is no more value in money?' I asked.

"Suddenly we were startled by a clashing from the town below. The cathedral bells, which had been silent ever since I had come into the district, were beginning, with a sort of rheumatic difficulty, to ring. Presently they warmed a little to the work and we realised what was going on. They were ringing a peal. We listened with an unbelieving astonishment and looking into each other's yellow faces.

"'They mean it,' said my colleague.

"'But what can they do now?' I asked. 'Everything is broken down. . . .'"

And on that sentence, with an unexpected artistry, Barnet abruptly ends his story.

§ 4.

From the first the new government handled affairs with a certain greatness of spirit. Indeed, it was inevitable that they should act greatly. From the first they had to see the round globe as one problem; it was impossible any longer to deal with it piece by piece. They had to secure it universally from any fresh outbreak of atomic destruc-

tion, and they had to ensure a permanent and universal pacification. On this capacity to grasp and wield the whole round globe their existence depended. There was no scope for any inferior performance.

So soon as the seizure of the existing supplies of atomic ammunition and the apparatus for synthesising Carolinum was assured, the disbanding or social utilisation of the various masses of troops still under arms had to be arranged, the salvation of the year's harvests and the feeding, housing and employment of the drifting millions of homeless people. In Canada, in South America and Asiatic Russia there were vast accumulations of provision that was immovable only because of the breakdown of the monetary and credit systems. These had to be brought into the famine districts very speedily if entire depopulation was to be avoided, and their transportation and the revival of communications generally absorbed a certain proportion of the soldiery and more able unemployed. The task of housing assumed gigantic dimensions, and from building camps the housing committee of the council speedily passed to constructions of a more permanent type. They found far less friction than might have been expected in turning the loose population on their hands to these things. People were extraordinarily tamed by that year of suffering and death; they were disillusioned of their traditions, bereft of once obstinate prejudices; they felt foreign in a strange world and ready to follow any confident leadership. The orders of the new government came with the best of all credentials, rations. The people everywhere were as easy to control, one of the old labour experts who had survived until the new time witnesses, "as gangs of emigrant workers in a new land."

And now it was that the social possibilities of the atomic energy began to appear. The new machinery that had come into existence before the last wars increased and multiplied, and the council found itself not only with millions of hands at its disposal, but with power and apparatus that made its first conceptions of the work it had to do seem pitifully timid. The camps that were planned in iron and deal were built in stone and brass; the roads that were to have been mere iron tracks became spacious ways that insisted upon architecture; the cultivations of food-stuffs that were to

have supplied emergency rations, were presently, with synthesisers, fertilisers, actinic light and scientific direction, in excess of every human need.

The government had begun with the idea of temporarily reconstituting the social and economic system that had prevailed before the first coming of the atomic engine, because it was to this system that the ideas and habits of the great mass of the world's dispossessed population was adapted. Subsequent rearrangement it had hoped to leave to its successors—whoever they might be. But this, it became more and more manifest, was absolutely impossible. As well might the council have proposed a revival of slavery. The capitalistic system had already been smashed beyond repair by the onset of limitless gold and energy; it fell to pieces at the first endeavour to stand it up again. Already before the war half of the industrial class had been out of work; the attempt to put them back into wages employment on the old lines was futile from the outset,—the absolute shattering of the currency system alone would have been sufficient to prevent that, and it was necessary, therefore, to take over the housing, feeding, and clothing of this world-wide multitude without exacting any return in labour whatever. In a little while the mere absence of occupation for so great a multitude of people everywhere became an evident social danger, and the government was obliged to resort to such devices as simple decorative work in wood and stone, the manufacture of hand-woven textiles, fruit growing, flower growing, and landscape gardening on a grand scale to keep the less adaptable out of mischief, and of paying wages to the younger adults for attendance at schools that would equip them to use the new atomic machinery. . . . So quite insensibly the council drifted into a complete reorganisation of urban and industrial life, and indeed of the entire social system.

Ideas that are unhampered by political intrigue or financial considerations have a sweeping way with them, and before a year was out the records of the council show clearly that it was rising to its enormous opportunity, and partly through its own direct control and partly through a series of specific committees, it was planning a new common social order for the entire population of the earth. "There can be no real social stability or any general human happi-

ness while large areas of the world and large classes of people are in a phase of civilisation different from the prevailing mass. It is impossible now to have great blocks of population misunderstanding the generally accepted social purpose or at an economic disadvantage to the rest." So the council expressed its conception of the problem it had to solve. The peasant, the field-worker, and all barbaric cultivators were at an "economic disadvantage" to the more mobile and educated classes, and the logic of the situation compelled the council to take up systematically the supersession of this stratum by a more efficient organisation of production. It developed a scheme for the progressive establishment throughout the world of the "modern system" in agriculture, a system that should give the full advantages of a civilised life to every agricultural worker, and this replacement has been going on right up to the present day. The central idea of the modern system is the substitution of cultivating guilds for the individual cultivator and for cottage and village life altogether. These guilds are associations of men and women who take over areas of arable or pasture land, and make themselves responsible for a certain average produce. They are bodies small enough as a rule to be run on a strictly democratic basis and large enough to supply all the labour, except for a certain assistance from townspeople during the harvest, needed upon the land farmed. They have watchers' bungalows or chalets on the ground cultivated, but the ease and costlessness of modern locomotion enables them to maintain a group of residences in the nearest town with a common dining-room and club-house, and usually also a guild house in the national or provincial capital. Already this system has abolished a distinctively "rustic" population throughout vast areas of the old world where it has prevailed immemorially. That shy, unstimulated life of the lonely hovel, the narrow scandals and petty spites and persecutions of the small village, that hoarding, half inanimate existence away from books, thought or social participation, and in constant contact with cattle, pigs, poultry and their excrement is passing away out of human experience. In a little while it will be gone altogether. In the nineteenth century it had already ceased to be a necessary human state, and only the absence of any collec-

tive intelligence and an imagined need for tough and unintelligent soldiers and for a prolific class at a low level, prevented its systematic replacement at that time. . . .

And while this settlement of the country was in progress, the urban camps of the first phase of the council's activities were rapidly developing, partly through the inherent forces of the situation and partly through the council's direction, into a modern type of town. . . .

(*To be continued.*)

"Love Letters from ——"

By the Earl of Arran, K.P.

My Dearest,—

I can hazily recall the ending of my last letter and it must have struck you as being more like the ravings of a dipsomaniac than the letter of a more or less respectable man.

To-day I have nothing much to tell you, but I cannot deny myself the pleasure of writing on such a glorious day. The ancients believed that the most beautiful things in the world were a ship in full sail, and a lady in a condition which I personally consider to be distressingly hideous.

To my mind the most beautiful things in the world are a summer day, and the march past of a Cavalry Regiment.

Have you ever seen a Cavalry Regiment go by the saluting base? It is a thing that one can never forget. Such a display of concentrated and controlled force.

And the wailing of the band, with the "thud, thud" of the kettle-drums, the silver jingle of the bits and bridles, the snorting of the horses, are sounds which only seem to emphasise the silence of the whole.

And in the distance, the words of command of the leaders of the rear squadrons as they come on to the passing line:—

"Left wheel into line!"
"Forward!"
"Eyes Right!"

and the passing of the long lines of horsemen.

I have seen many sights, but none more grand. The finest men I have ever known were all soldiers.

Solway, Everton and James. All Scotchmen. You do not know Solway. You would delight in him. Like you he is one of Nature's masterpieces.

A fine horseman, a brilliant musician, with a power of conversation that makes everyone listen, and the supreme

gift of all—a leader of men! Perhaps I hope you won't meet him, for he is kind, and gentle, and modest almost to diffidence, and such a combination is irresistible. Everton is the same, though he may lack some of the brilliancy of the other. And being both so simple, their influence made their Regiments as brave, and simple as they are themselves.

Of James I cannot trust myself to speak. His life and his death should be the pride of every Englishman's mother, the envy and example of every Englishwoman's son. He and his comrades rest in South Africa.

Honour to those brave dead.

Soundly they sleep, and all the more soundly, since by their sleeping the graves that they rest in are in English ground.

They have fought the great fight.

They have made the great sacrifice, their slate is clean.

Good night.

18th July.

MY DEAREST,—

I had luncheon at the Paulets'. You don't know them. They are good, kind, affectionate, religious, and snobs. They are miserable at this last quality of theirs, but they cannot fight against it, and, indeed, the unkind part of it arises only from weakness and diffidence as to their own position. Even from that point of view this is needless, through themselves and through their other qualities, which approach perfection. I tell you all this because you do not know them, and I am afraid that you probably never will. Their house is one of the chief centres of those "beings" who in many ways are the most prominent constellations of the artistic universe, and who add to their lustre by revolving round that centre sun of brilliancy, the sacred Henry Binks. The sun was there—drooping in a frock-coat—but still the sun. Nine of the chief constellations came also, and I felt like a body foreign to a heavenly atmosphere. Indeed, Anne Paulet whispered to me in the kindest way imaginable that she hadn't known that "Henry" was coming when she asked me.

The conversation was general and delightful. Epigrams on art, education, tariff reform, politics, anything and everything, flew about like shuttlecocks, and I really

enjoyed myself. Every now and then "Henry" took part in the conversation, when "there was silence still as death —and the boldest held his breath—for a time!" which time lasted until, "Oh, Mr. Henry, how wonderful!" burst from every tongue. I, too, longed to speak, but I dared not until a subject on which I was really well informed should crop up.

At last it did! The wreck of the *Titanic* was being discussed, and Potter's Bar, Henry Binks' chief henchman, said, "Dear Henry, what is a garboard strake, and why didn't they set it on the *Titanic?* Surely it might have saved some of the women and children?" "Henry" feared that in the hurry of departure the garboard strake must have been left behind!

You are aware, my dearest, that I am an enthusiast about shipbuilding, and know that a garboard strake is that part of the ship's bottom that comes next to the keel, and so could not have been left. I hazarded this opinion with deference. Metaphorically, the constellations turned simultaneously backwards on their orbits, or at least ceased to revolve, and the heavenly atmosphere became lurid. Anne Paulet giggled nervously, her kindness of heart making a struggle with her shame. Potter's Bar was not so kind. "*Dear Henry has said* that it was left behind," and he and the others gazed upon me with unutterable loathing! Good night.

BINGLEY PARK, *23rd July.*

MY DEAREST,—

My neighbour at dinner last night was Mrs. Macfarlane, who confided to me that she was miserable because she was allowed to eat nothing owing to her health. As a matter of fact, my hostess told me afterwards that the greater part of Mrs. Macfarlane's inside is encased in aluminium, and is the pride of her doctor's life. She went to London to-day to see him, and returns to-night; so I presume she has had extra rivets put into her inside, so as to strengthen it sufficiently to indulge properly in the pleasures of the table!

There is a local scandal here. The wife of a neighbouring squire, aged fifty, and weighing fifteen stone, has fled to Chicago. Nobody knows why, but in the present

condition of nervousness the rumour goes that she has been kidnapped as a wh—te sl—ve. Her appearance renders it unlikely. Indeed, she resembles nothing so much as a large pink pig, and the immigration authorities may in error divert her to that Chicago industry, where a pig walks in at one end and comes out sausages at the other. However, her family can never receive her again, whether as a wh—te sl—ve or as a sausage, and the neighbourhood has something to talk about.

Your letter arrived this morning. Such a pleasure—you cannot imagine it!

Old Mr. Bertram took me for a walk, and told me a curious thing to-day. His grandfather, who died about seventy years ago, lived an atheist and died one. His death-bed was an awful scene of suffering and blasphemy. His grandson's parents thought that this would be a splendid object-lesson against atheism, and so took their wretched little son of ten to see his grandfather depart, and accompanied this dreadful experience with judicious warnings that that was how atheists die, and if he became an atheist he would die like that also! People were savages during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Will you come with me to the Albert Hall Fancy Ball? I do hope that you won't, because you are thirty-one and I am forty-three, and dressing up is the proper amusement of our younger children, if we had any. I saw the Fancy Ball last year from the gallery, and it was a pretty sight. Almost as pretty as the transformation scene of the pantomime, but, of course, not so good.

Perhaps dressing up is all right for ladies. But what about middle-aged men? Powdered, patched, and pretending to be what they are not, and praying for admiration for themselves and for their clothes. Some of their ancestors died in the breaches at Badajos, &c., &c. Their descendants prefer to live in the breeches of their ancestors.

Good-night, my dearest.

1st August.

MY DEAREST,—

I have made a discovery hitherto unknown to man. It is the great secret of the female sex, and has been jealously and successfully guarded. You know it, being

a married woman, and after the hive of bees you will be suspected unfairly of having imparted it to me.

It is the secret of the widow's costume that every married woman carries about with her concealed by a false bottom to her trunk.

During a long life I have seen many widows—some of them when their widowhood was but a few hours old, and yet they were in complete widow's uniform, correct to every strap and buckle, and the whole kit fitting like a glove, and in the latest fashion. This effort cannot be bought ready-made to fit so perfectly. It is therefore evident that a widow's uniform is part of every bride's trousseau, and is tried on and altered every three weeks, so as to be prepared for the fateful motor accident which may render the garb necessary.

Once in the country a friend of mine died suddenly while I was staying in his house. His wife sent for me two hours after the melancholy event, and, needless to say, she was in the complete perfection of widowhood as far as her garments went. She was in dreadful grief, poor thing, and begged me as a favour to write down at her dictation telegrams announcing her sorrow to her relations. To her sister she telegraphed:

> "My darling fell asleep to-day. How am I to bear it? Please get me a Marie Stuart cap—Your heartbroken E."

A man does not prepare for grief like this! True, his evening trousers help him out for the time, but during the first moments of his sorrow he does not think of his trousers or whether they are of the Marie Stuart pattern!

Good-night.

IN THE TRAIN, *Saturday*.

MY DEAREST,—

I am back from abroad, and my business is completed. I had to go as far as Capuentina. *Such* a lovely place. We will go there "some day." For "some day" is coming very soon now, my darling—please Goodness! And say "please goodness" with all reverence, for I am sure that we are only doing what is best. My business you

know, and you will know the results in the newspapers before you receive this letter, so I won't bother you with them.

I was only two days and a night at Capuentina.

I went at once to call at the Consulate, where I should find telegrams giving my final instructions. Never have I seen anything so dreary as the Consulate, or so God-forsaken as the poor Consul. He had made efforts to attain to an unhabitual sobriety, and had only partially succeeded. But he is deserving of sympathy. He is almost the only resident Englishman in the place. An epidemic of typhoid is raging, while small-pox and diphtheria are endemic. The poor Consul seemed to have no hope and no pleasures. I asked him if there was an English Club. He said "No," but added that there was an English cemetery. Never have I seen a more hopeless instance of humanity—a man who had forgotten God, and whom God Himself had forgotten. All that the Consul could remember was whisky, and whisky in such a case as this is mercy in a golden guise.

I went to see him again in the evening, and he was gloriously, supremely, enviably, happily drunk.

I dined with the Governor, and there was a large dinner-party. What is there about the Latin races which makes them so much gayer than ourselves? The conversation was frivolous and charming. Every man and every woman was anxious to please and to appear at advantage. The men resplendent in orders—the ladies in the brightest gowns that I have ever seen.

It was delightful.

The poor Consul, alas! was not present, but he, too, was happy—in his own way.

Do you see that Edward is divorcing his wife? I always wonder whether the peaceful method of the divorce court is not a sign of our degeneracy? After all, no man can do another a more mortal injury than to break up his home and steal his wife's affections—that is, if the injured husband has played his part. And an injury such as that is, certainly appears to be too meekly accepted by a "decree nisi."

Duelling may be a barbarism, but in a case such as this it would appear to be the only way out of the difficulty.

Edward and Johnny Bateman have been friends for years, and Johnny Bateman, deliberately and in spite of his friendship for Edward, makes love successfully to Edward's wife. It seems to me that the only proceeding that should content Edward would be to have a shot at Johnny Bateman, and *then* to divorce Mrs. E.

Years ago, however, I sat next to a very prominent man who discussed the matter warmly. He was about twenty-five years older than I, and, being slightly intoxicated, gave me his advice. "My boy," said he, "if ever I had a wife and someone else made love to her, I shouldn't fight him, because I have too large a stake in the country. This is the thing to do. Hire six prize-fighters to waylay him on a dark night, and watch them beat him!" This is Boodle's advice, and I am sure that this is the way in which he would act.

He is sixty and more now, and his conscience is bad, so he drowns it in whisky and water.

How odd it is that all elderly "personages," when they take to drink, always indulge their propensity in the most plebeian shape of all—whisky and water.

Good-night.

DALE, *4th August.*

MY DEAREST,—

Such a curious incident has happened to me to-day. The neighbouring local magnate died a year ago, and has been succeeded by his great nephew, whom he had never seen.

The new man is not a bad fellow, and would be better if it were not for his wife and sons, who do not realise that to be a "personage" in these days is more comic than grand. And they live in their park, and never leave it, since they find that their illusions are rather disturbed if they mix with the outer world.

As a neighbour I went to call, and found "the Marquis," as he is described in his home, in the hall with six of the loveliest young ladies ranged in a row behind him. They were beautifully if unusually dressed in gold and green tail-coats, with golden aiguillettes and black skirts; and I thought that my arrival was inopportune, since it was evident that a theatrical rehearsal of some sort was in full

swing. The "Marquis" shook hands with me with kindly politeness, and then I sprang to greet the Ladies O'Murphy, naturally taking them for his daughters, being unaware that he had none. He grew red with passion, exclaiming, "Oh, don't, don't," and proceeded to explain that his wife abominated men servants, and only employed women servants, whom she dressed in the O'Murphy state liveries as far as their waists—presuming, I suppose, that the Emperor of Russia might "drop in"!

I apologised profoundly, and, having been forgiven, was conducted down the hall to the drawing-room. As we passed along we met the housekeeper, whose friendly greeting seemed out of place in this aristocratic atmosphere! Not wishing to offend again, I passed her outstretched hand with hauteur, when to my dismay my host cried out in tones of anguish, "Let me present you to my Marchioness!" I am afraid that I shall not be *persona grata* at Castle Murphy in the future.

I saw an old farmer to-day who was a tenant and friend of my father's! They both were great rivals in cattle-breeding, and everything else that farmers try to excel each other in, and, oddly enough, married at the same time.

Soon after the weddings my father, accompanied by my mother, met his friend at the fair, and introduced him to her. "Yer Honour's got me beat at last!" said the farmer; "yer Honour's got the fhoinest girl in Ireland! I wish to God you could see what *I*'ve got!" he added, in a melancholy tone.

Good-night, my dearest.

DALE, 14*th October*.

MY DEAREST,—

London is a good leveller. There everyone is judged by his or her merits (except, of course, if they have money), and are successful according to the way in which each succeeds in his particular profession.

Politics, social qualities, music, philanthropy, all are methods by which one may shine in London with the most successful results if one can manage to attain to the highest ranks of accomplishment. Certainly London is brilliant, and takes no interest in those rural magnates who

have nothing to recommend them but their "magnateisms," and so the rural magnates come once to London expecting London to pay fealty to them, and finding that in London they are of no account, they return to their backwoods and revenge themselves on the local doctor and parson. We shall soon be out of it, and the little money that we shall keep back for ourselves will be insufficient to cause envy in any breast. Oh, how I wish that I could have seen you, if only for an hour, before I returned here. The house is dreary beyond conception, and the memories are dreadful. Even Bannock—the ever kind and thoughtful Bannock—gazes at me with pity for me and for himself, as he finds it very dull.

Fritz and I spent all the morning at the office, and, alas! he left for Dublin by the midday mail. So now I am all alone, and the few pictures of some sombre ancestors that are left here gloat over my melancholy. I wish they were convivial ancestors like those in the whisky advertisement, and would jump out of their frames and keep me company.

A neighbour of mine here did a curious thing. He put two baths in one room. "So convenient," said he! But I hardly agreed with him, as I found that it was the custom of the house for guests to use both baths simultaneously, and bathing costumes were required. Afterwards I grew accustomed to it, and had a charming bath in company—all attired in costumes at which no one, however particular, could cavil, while my host, attired in his bathing-gown, chattered as he unselfishly awaited his turn.

This afternoon I went out snipe shooting. This house is built on a snipe bog, which is sporting if damp. Such a nice bag—two grouse, a teal, six snipe, a duck, a landrail, and a shot at a wild goose which failed. You, my dearest, will laugh at me, but honestly mine is the better part. Some day, after the hive of bees, we will live here occasionally, and you will see what I mean.

I go back to London to-morrow. We will have luncheon together as usual. I cannot tell you, my dearest, how deeply I have missed you this last fortnight. You are everything in the world to me, and it is nothing as compared to you.

Good-night, my dearest.

FEEDH, *7th January.*

When did I write to you last, my dear? For during my illness I was unable to write, and as soon as I was well enough to hold a pen, I saw you every day.

Do you ever find that one can express oneself better in letters than in words? I do! Sometimes! For when I am with you the magic of your presence intoxicates me, and my brain ceases to act as it should. And this illness of mine has weakened me, and my brain is languid and lazy. Sometimes, before it came, I used to wonder whether the fear of death would be stronger than my love for you. Time has answered this conundrum. When that gloomy doctor had asked me whether I had any affairs to set in order, and I knew that I was dying, I had only one thought, and that was the intensity of the sorrow of leaving you.

And now I know what I had always believed: that love is everything—love conquers everything—and love makes everything right. And you must learn that lesson also, though you are fearless of death.

The wind is blowing strongly to-day. There is nothing like the wind. It blows everything away. Disease—fear—trouble—and it exhilarates. In my foolish and youthful past I fancied myself as a jockey, and, amidst the plaudits and jeers of a humorous crowd, used to laboriously flog aged and dilatory hunters round minor steeplechase courses.

I grew accustomed to being among the "also ran," and was contented. One day, to my surprise, and to the astonishment of the onlookers, I found myself during one of these performances neck and neck with another at the last fence but one. Every lesson that had ever been taught me concentrated itself into the two words, "Sit still." And I sat still. And the horses galloped, and the wind sang in my ears, and the crowd roared and my head swam, and I sat still and my horse won his race.

That was exhilaration, and the sound of wind still brings that exhilaration back.

Last night I slept badly, so at five I got up and sat by the window, and waited for the dawn!

Do you like the dawn? I love it! I like it best from the train. Some day we will watch it together from a *wagon lit* abroad somewhere. I will climb down from my berth and sit by you at the window, and watch the black

changing into grey and silver, and then, as the sun rises, the world burst into the blaze of colour of the day. And although the carriage will be heated, there will still be the chill of the dawning, so the nice, kind train-man will bring you lovely hot coffee to warm you, and then you will creep back to your berth for another hour's sleep while I sit by you and watch you sleeping, and thank God with all the strength of my gratitude for the wonderful infinite blessing of you.

I have again spared you my letters for a little while. It has been difficult to write in this tiresome condition of languor, and a young man has recently taught me how tiresome to the recipient long dull letters may be. This young man is a regular correspondent with different members of this house, and the language of his letters is so beautiful and correct that it imposed on everyone, and no one ventured to express the secret thought that they were tiresome letters, lest he or she should condemn their own lack of intellect in failing to appreciate them. At last this morning the sight of a letter in the well-known correct handwriting, and the belief that I was alone, caused me to exclaim, "Another letter from Tomkins! Damn!" Thank heavens, I was not alone after all! Others were by the table where the letters are spread out, and heard me. The barrier of our mutual deceit was broken, and out came the flood of truth—that Tomkins was as stupid as an owl, and that his letters bored us all to death. And it was decided that he was never to be invited here again, and that his endless correspondence was not to be encouraged by reply.

And that is the end of Tomkins and his letters, but it has caused me seriously to wonder whether the contents of your post-bag makes you exclaim also, "Another letter from ——! Damn!" Away, vile thought! I will not think it! It is much more pleasant to believe what you have told me—that my letters are welcome, and that you re-read them.

I stayed at Even for a week. Such a nice house. And such a charming host and hostess. The latter, in spite of her son of thirty, is young, handsome, witty, and gay, and her house is always full of the joy of living. I was very sorry indeed when the week was over. Bless you, my sweet—I must go to bed. My throat is always a

reminiscence of my illness, and I am still sometimes as husky as an owl.

Good-night.

My dearest, the time has come, and this day next week, we shall be together until the end. "And what end?"

My darling, our beliefs are our own, and they can comfort us in the hours of our sorest need!

Our lives—the lives of each of us—have been rather dreary lives, and you, dear heart, in particular have been born to many sorrows, but the dawn is breaking for us now. The battle is to the strong. I have no ties. You have none which should bind you. We have decided, and we have the future, and the future only, to concern us.

You will stick to your plan of leaving England on Tuesday, and going to Geneva. Write to your brothers from there, saying what you have done and where you have gone. They should receive it Thursday morning. I shall arrive at Geneva Friday midday.

Now that the time has come, I know that we have done the only thing that is possible to us, for, as you have taught me and I have learnt the lesson, "Love is the only thing that matters or that counts!"

Au revoir.

An Ordinary Corpse

By Grant Watson

The Nallin farmstead was a low, squat building of wood. It consisted of four rooms linked together by a deep verandah that ran along the front. At the back there were outhouses, a kitchen and scullery built of tarred hessian. Harris and his wife had lived in the farmstead for some twelve years; they farmed sheep on an extensive scale, and employed a great many blacks and half-castes. Mrs. Harris was an emigrant from England, and had not been consulted as to their choice of occupation. She had been a loyal wife, and had made the rough existence of a pioneer-settler tolerable and even pleasant for her husband. At the same time she had always hated the bush, had never felt comfortable with her black servants, and had spent all the most active hours of her life either looking forward to, or in happily remembering, the occasional visits they had been able to make to neighbouring towns. She had not, like some women, been able to appreciate or live in close friendliness with the strange fantastic beauty of the bush, but always had anticipated the time when she and her husband could afford to retire. For this reason she had never troubled to make the small house they lived in a home, but had looked upon her stay in it as a temporary and enforced habitation. The four meagre rooms were scantily furnished, and on the walls the only decoration were the advertisements and almanacks of enterprising tradesmen. For twelve years she had lived hating the house and the strange, unfamiliar land that stretched flat on all sides, away to the horizon. And now, after so many years of work and solitude she had fallen ill. In her back and chest there was a sharp and unaccountable pain. She lay restless and small in the middle of the big bed under the mosquito-net, now and then turning from side to side and groaning. The heat was suffocating, for the sun beat

down fiercely upon the roof and the sunbeams sifted in through chinks in the woodwork. In the parlour two men were sitting—Harris, a strong sunburnt Australian, and a young Norwegian, who was engaged as assistant and helper on the farm. He had only been but a short time in that district, but had proved himself willing and capable. The two men sat without speaking, listening to the painful irregular breathing of the sick woman which was clearly audible through the thin partition. The flies buzzed unceasingly in the still, confined air, and a peculiar odour of hot wood and dry Stockholm tar filled the room. On the walls the posters and almanacks cracked and curled, made brittle by the dry, scorching heat.

Harris broke the silence. "I don't a bit like the sound of that breathing. It's strange this illness coming on so suddenly; she's never shown any sort of ailment before. Anyway, I'm not going to run any risks. I shall ride into Cue and get a doctor; it's only five-and-twenty miles or so. I shan't follow the regular track, but shall cut across country. I've been across that way before, and ought to be back not long after dark."

"Hadn't I better go, and let you stay and look after your wife? You'll be a bit more able to know what she wants than I will."

"No, I had better go; you don't know the land well yet. I can make the cross-country journey an hour or two quicker than you could by keeping to the regular track. And I wouldn't like you to leave the track; the chances are you would lose your way. It needs an old bushman to know this country. I don't think you need worry about my wife; she's not the sort of woman to give a deal of trouble, and that half-caste girl will do any little thing that's wanted. All I ask of you is not to go far from the homestead, that I may feel that there is someone responsible about. I shall start almost at once. You might tell one of the men to get my horse saddled."

"Very well; but I tell you I shan't be sorry to see you back and the doctor with you."

An hour after Harris had left the station, one of the native girls who was usually occupied about the kitchen came up to Olsen and told him that Mrs. Harris was suddenly taken very ill, and wanted to speak to him at once.

He went straight to the house, and, with already a slight feeling of apprehension, he knocked at the bedroom door.

"Is that Mr. Olsen?"

"Yes."

"Come in, please."

He entered, hat in hand, into the darkened room. Mrs. Harris was lying hunched up in the middle of the bed, her breathing was deep and irregular; she seemed to be in pain, and spoke unnecessarily loud. The half-caste girl stood near the window, stupid and open-mouthed. She stared at Olsen with an apprehensive, frightened stare.

"I want to speak to you; come close, please. These pains are killing me. I want you to promise me something." She stretched out a hand that seized his, drew him closer towards her, and looked with keen, piercing eyes into his. "If I should die here, promise faithfully that you will take my body back to the town and have me buried where there are people."

"But you won't die. Your husband will come back this evening with a doctor, and then you will soon get better." For some moments the woman struggled hard for breath, then lay still, exhausted by the paroxysm

She spoke again, this time in a lower voice, deliberately and slowly. "I know what I am saying, and I want you to promise that whatever happens I shall not be buried out here in the bush. Take me into the town and let me be once again where there are people."

"Yes, I promise." He looked at her straight and pressed her hand.

"You promise?"

"Yes."

She seemed easier, then after a short silence spoke again. "You men don't know how lonely it is for a woman in a place like this. You have your work and things to prevent you from thinking, but women are left alone in the house, and have nothing to look at all day long but the horrible bare country and the hot cruel sunlight that scorches up everything to powder. The black people are the only people who should live in this country. It's their land, and they ought to be left alone in it; it's fit for them. Although I know that there are only a few left, I always seem to see others; wild ones slipping in and out between

the bushes. I don't want to be left among them, but to be taken back to my own people." She paused for a moment, then went on, speaking quickly: "They say, you know, that their spirits exist after they are dead, and that there are hundreds always watching, angry that they have been killed and their descendants driven out by the white settlers. That's why I'm afraid to be left here. We don't know how many thousands of their spirits there may be. That's why I make you promise to take me away, and not, whatever happens, to let me be buried in the bush."

Olsen had never before been brought up close to the thought of death. It now entered his head as a possibility that Mrs. Harris might die. He was moved and astonished by the change in her. In the last eighteen months he had grown accustomed to her existence, had come to regard her almost as if she were some piece of furniture—the woman who prepared his food for him, and to whom he must be decently civil. She was the wife of his employer; her business was to direct the doings of the black women and the half-castes, and to keep the house in order. He had looked upon her as a businesslike, capable woman, unattractive and elderly, and had never suspected this vein of imagination, with which now for the first time she interested him keenly. In the silence that followed he began to wonder what qualities she has possessed that had at first attracted Harris. He looked furtively at the flushed face, and wondered what she had been like as a girl. Then he thought of Helga, the girl in Norway that he was engaged to, and who was coming out to marry him as soon as he had made enough money to buy a station of his own and start as an independent farmer. He thought of the hopeful letters he had written, and wondered, for the first time, how if she also should dislike the life. The voice of the sick woman, this time petulant and tearful, broke in upon his thoughts.

"I have lived here in this desolate place for twelve years and more, always hoping that we should make enough money to leave and go back to the town. But the more we succeeded, the more we have become fixed to the soil. I hate this country. I hate Australia, and wish I had never left London. I have worked here all my life as a servant, a drudge, and now have got to die far away from all my

friends and relatives. It's too hard!" She burst out crying in a fit of self-pity.

The heat in the room was stifling. Olsen ordered the half-caste girl to fan the door to and fro, and so make a draught. In a little time he felt the grip from his hand released. Slowly and carefully he drew his fingers away; she was asleep, and seemed to be breathing more comfortably than before. He tiptoed his way to the door and out on to the verandah. Here, where it was cooler, he sat down in one of the deck-chairs, and gazed out across the white glare of dry, dusty earth, across to a distant rise of ground where the mulga-bushes and dwarfed gum-trees looked grey and feather-like. He felt unaccountably depressed and injured, almost as if he had been struck across the face by an invisible hand. Somehow his confidence and belief in himself had been shaken. He wondered whether his dearest hopes for the girl he loved, she who was coming out to share, as his faithful comrade, a life of hardship and endeavour, would ever degenerate into a complaint so draggled, pitiful and sad as that he had just heard from the sick woman who lay on the other side of that thin partition in the stuffy, untidy bedroom. No, things could never be like that with his Helga! and yet a grey wing of doubt had passed between him and what seemed now to be his happy illusion. His happy, spontaneous egoism, from which he drew all his strength, had been touched and checked for a moment by a feeling of the responsibility involved in taking over the management and care of a woman's life. For the first time he looked upon the land as in some ways undesirable. It no longer shone in his imagination in the fine colours with which he had painted it in his letters—a land with a glorious climate where fortunes might be made, and money, at any rate, came easily in return for steady labour. He sat for an hour or more, musing and idle; then, since he had heard no sound from the bedroom, shook himself out of his meditations and went to the farm-buildings to feed the horses and the cattle. When he returned he found that the half-caste girl had sunk down close to the door, which he had told her to keep fanning, and had fallen asleep across the threshold. He stepped over her body and entered the room. On the bed the woman

was stretched stiff and straight; her eyes were open, and in the corner of one of them a drought-stricken fly, which had found its way under the mosquito-net, was perched, seeking to quench its thirst. He knew in a moment that Mrs. Harris was dead, and felt a quick shudder of heat pass over his body. Quickly he stepped forward, brushed the fly away, and closed those glassy, staring eyes. He then folded the hands and covered the body with a sheet. At the door the girl was still asleep. He touched her. She sprang up at once, like a frightened animal. "Your mistress is dead," he said. She blinked at him, seeming hardly to understand; then going to the bed she lifted the sheet and looked under. In a moment she dropped to the ground and began keening native-fashion. His nerves, strung by the event, fiercely resented the clamorous and barbaric noise, which seemed an outrage both to the dead and to the hushed silence upon which they broke.

"Stop that, do you hear? Stop it at once!" He seized her by the shoulder and shook her; she moaned more loudly, turning up towards him a grotesquely mocking face, made wet and contorted by her emotion. He let her fall. She remained crouched and moaning on the floor. For a moment he stood irresolute what to do; then, seeing that he could do nothing, he walked out into the air. He felt an illogical annoyance towards women in general that sprang partly from his aversion to the half-caste girl, and partly from the glimpse he had into a world of emotion that he had not suspected, and that was counter to his own hopes and ambitions. The sun was setting, and the small, scrubby thorn-bushes that grew in the enclosure before the house threw long violet shadows on the earth, which was golden in the fading light. He walked out into the bush by himself, to be out of sound of the howling kept up by the half-caste. Night had fallen before he returned. He lighted the lamp in the parlour and decided to sit up and await the coming of the doctor.

In the meanwhile, Harris had arrived in Cue, and found that the doctor was out visiting a patient some seven miles away, and that he would probably not be back till the morning. He decided to put up for the night in the town and wait till the next morning, when the doctor would probably return.

At the farmstead the night passed gloomily. Olsen sat in the parlour and waited anxiously the arrival of the two men. Towards morning he slept, and woke to find the grey of dawn stretching across the sky. He went out and walked in the cool morning air, and watched the yellow sun creep above the horizon and cover the whole land with its first flood of bright, clear, golden light. After feeding the cattle and giving directions to the men, he returned to the house and entered the bedroom. The body lay there stiff and cold. As he lifted the sheet a faint, unpleasant odour touched his nostrils. He went out, distressed and revolted at the unseemly impatience of natural forces that had so little reverence for human dignity.

By eleven o'clock the sun was high overhead and the heat was stifling in the wooden house, and yet there was no sign of the expected men. Why didn't they come? Of course, he guessed the doctor had been away, and even then when he had returned had perhaps been subsequently delayed. He walked up and down the verandah, thinking what course of action he should follow. If that corpse was going to be buried, it ought to be buried at once. He thought of his promise, which hardly for a moment had left his mind. She should be buried amongst her own people. He called to one of the native women, and with her help wrapped the body tightly in the sheets of the bed. His plan was to put the body in the cart and drive with it into Cue. He decided to follow the hoof-marks of Harris's horse. It would be easy enough to drive across country through that open scrub, where the bushes and small trees were separated by many yards of dry, dusty earth. If he followed the hoof-marks he would, he knew, save an hour or so, and he was likely to meet Harris and the doctor, who were certain to come the shortest way.

For some miles he drove at a good pace. He was happier now, glad to have made his decision and to have some definite line of action. He came to the boundary-fence and saw where Harris had unhitched the wire. The track was clear and easy to follow. About three miles from the fence a herd of semi-wild horses belonging to a neighbour had crossed the track. Some seemed to have crossed it, and others to have run along level for a short distance. There were other hoof-marks here also, some

made days earlier. Olsen got down and examined the marks. Two of the horses at least were shod, though most of them were colts. He walked the cart for some distance, then saw the tracks divide, some going straight on, some diverging slightly to the left. He knew the direction of the town, also took careful note of the position of the sun, and examined the tracks carefully. Then he decided to follow straight on. For some four miles he drove, then suddenly came on a small herd of horses that looked up at him startled, snorted, then cantered away to a further distance, from which to look back at him inquiringly. He cursed his luck. He had followed the wrong track; but still he did not think he had gone far out of the way. It would be easy enough to cut across and strike the other. He whipped up the horse and struck into the bush on the left. The heat beat down terrifically upon him, and the flies, which swarm everywhere in the Australian bush, buzzed in clouds before his eyes and clustered hungrily about the object wrapped in the sheet that lay strapped to the floor-boards and which jolted with the pathetic stupidity of inanimate things. He pressed on hurriedly towards the track.

Miles passed, and yet there was no sign of the looked-for footmarks. He stopped the cart and stood up on the seat for a better view. All round in every direction there was nothing to be seen but the swaying branches of dry, blue mulga-bushes. The sun was sloping down the sky towards the west. He knew there was no time to be lost, and was about to press on towards the town, when the thought struck him that Harris and the doctor might even then be only a short distance away, even then on their way back to the homestead. He raised his voice in a long, high-pitched "Cooee" that he knew would carry far through the thin, still air. The sound shot away into the distance and disappeared without an echo. Its sharp, piercing quality sounded in his ears like a scream for help that quickly was absorbed by some ponderous and indifferent spirit that brooded over the land. He sent a following shout that as quickly fled trembling, impetuous, and ineffective. The silence settled round him, pressing upon his heart so that he clutched at his breast. He must be very careful and not lose his head, or else he might get

bushed indeed. He looked at the shadows lying from N.W. to S.E. His way lay to the south; he must be careful to keep the sun behind him on his right side. He whipped up the horse and pressed on hurriedly. Another hour passed. He ought by now to be on the outskirts of the town. Then, to his despair, he saw a low ridge of red hills close in on his left. Such hills are called Breakaways in that part of the country. They are long, low walls of rock with perpendicular sides, formed of red, decaying granite. He knew then that he was bushed and hopelessly off the track. He turned round and looked at the long white object that lay in the bottom of the cart, and the full horror of his situation came with a flash. There followed an intense desire to be out of this predicament at any price, even at the price of death. If only death could come quickly. He was afraid of what degradation the next hours might contain. Then a ray of hope fell amongst the gloom of his fear. He could follow the wheel-ruts back, and so, at any rate, get to the homestead. He turned the horse quickly round and began to retrace the course he had covered. Then he remembered that he was thirsty, had been very thirsty for hours, and had no more water to drink. He lashed the horse into a gallop, bending forward and fiercely cracking the whip. The thing behind him lurched from side to side. The horse galloped bravely for a time, then slowed into a heavy, lumbering canter. The sun was now setting. The way was terribly long, and his thirst seemed unendurable. It might be quicker to let the horse find its own way home. Animals, he remembered, had instincts of direction that men lacked. He threw the reins down. The horse came to a standstill and waited. The fool of an animal! Why did it behave like that? He seized the whip and cut at it fiercely. Startled and tired, it headed at random into the bush.

All through that night, which seemed like several years of blackness and obstruction, the tired and thirst-maddened man and beast fought their way on, bumping against trees and crashing over boughs, but always on and on, whilst the corpse behind jolted and bumped from side to side. He dared not look back at that terrible burden, nor dared he think of what was happening beneath the thick folds of the sheet. With malicious and mocking irony, thoughts

tortured his throbbing brain, thoughts exaggerated and deformed flitted between him and the dead woman under whose roof he had lived for eighteen months, and who had never in all that time existed for him with any human interest. She had suddenly in her dying hour quickened his imagination, upset the equanimity of his convictions, set question-marks against his surest hopes, and had then relapsed into this irksome and revolting responsibility which dragged him to the depths of despair, to the edge of madness, and remained his sole companion, following with senseless and pathetic movements his wild and desperate course.

Light slowly crept into the cloudless sky, stars flickered and disappeared, the earth, expectant and refreshed, waited in silence for the rising of the sun. Suddenly a segment of yellow fire rose above the horizon, the tops of the bushes flushed golden, and violet shadows stretched themselves far across the land. A solitary bird whistled continuously, its shrill note sounding now near, now distant, like the squeaking of an unoiled wheel. A man, wild-eyed and desperate, paused and stood up in his cart to watch the sun, a burning globe, draw itself clear of the earth and rise into the sky. He gazed vacantly at its slow ascent. Perhaps he guessed at the pain and suffering it would inflict, at the wickedness and cruelty it daily witnessed, and wondered at the brightness of its rising that flooded the earth with so much beauty and calm. Suddenly he leapt to the ground, strode up to a tree and broke off a branch, trimmed it roughly with his knife; then he began to dig. After a while he paused, remained perfectly still, and gazed at the red earth he had displaced.

A hand was laid on his shoulder. He stood motionless. A faint breeze stirred his hair, and an unpleasant scent was in his nostrils. Then a voice whispered in his ear: "Your promise! You promised that I should be buried among people." With a wrench he turned abruptly upon her. She stood facing him, clad in the white sheet, her face exposed and her hair falling upon her shoulders.

"Go back to the cart!" he ordered, hoarsely. "Go back and lie down!"

"Your promise! Do not forget your promise! I cannot be left here in these wild places." She looked at

him with the same earnest, anxious gaze that brought back in a flash the close, suffocating room and the familiar smell of hot woodwork. She stretched out a hand, but he shrank away, trembling. She spoke in a plaintive voice. "I have lived here all the best years of my life; have hoped and worked in a hell of solitude—yes, of solitude and fear of these wild places. I can stand it now no longer. You must drive on, drive on." She swayed, fragile and entreating, before his eyes.

Between pity and anger he cried to her: "Why did you not go earlier? Why make me responsible?"

She answered: "Why did I ever come?" And then added, "It was all illusion, all disappointment."

He cried out in pain, "Helga, Helga, I shall never bring you to that!" Then brutally, "But it was your fault; you chose your life. You should not have expected impossible things."

"Drive on, drive on!" she urged.

"Then get back into the cart."

"No, I will drive beside you."

"Why?" He was petulant, angry at her assurance.

"I will show you the way. I will find the way to my own people." They mounted and sat side by side. The horse frantically plunged on, terrified at its unnatural burden.

"Do not sit too close," he said. "I am afraid for you to touch me; and why do you not brush the flies from your face?"

"Drive on! Drive on!" she urged. "Now turn to the left."

"Look! Look there! Behind that bush!" he shouted. "Do you not see that black man? Do you not see his spear, his gleaming shoulders?"

"Yes! Yes!" she screamed. "There are more of them. They lurk behind the bushes. See how they are watching us! How fierce and angry they look! Drive on! Drive on! Behind us there are hundreds; they follow on our track like wolves. They are closing in; they mean to bar our way; they will throw their spears. Shout at them, shout and sing! That will keep them back."

He shouted and sang hoarsely through his parched lips old Scandinavian songs which he had learnt in his boy-

hood. She joined in and sang with him, and the black men shrank back behind the bushes, frightened and appalled.

"How is it that you know Norwegian?" he asked.

The figure bent towards him whispering: "Have we not sung these songs together?" Horrified, he recognised the voice of Helga, saw her sitting there beside him deformed and hideous. He stood up, tearing his face with his nails. This was too horrible to be borne. How could she appear so monstrous, so distorted and ugly? The ugliness of life, of despair and disillusionment, killed even the desperate fury of his pain. Perhaps God would be merciful and let him die.

At mid-day the sun, high overhead, let fall shafts of burning heat upon the scorched and arid plains. The dry, blue leaves of the scant bushes curled and twisted, and the dusky earth gaped in long cracks beneath its power. Under one of the larger bushes the figure of a man was crouched, head low and scrabling with his hands in the dust. On one side of him stood the figure of a woman clad in a long sheet. She bent over him, whispering, "All my life I have lived in weariness and amid hopes disappointed." On his other side another figure crouched. She also whispered to him: "All was illusion and disappointment; all that we believed in, lies and worthless. Our promises were worthless, more worthless than our illusions."

The other figure bent closer till he felt her tainted breath on his cheek. "Your promise to me! Your promise! Drive on! Drive on!" He sprang up, exasperated and maddened. The two figures fled away, fused together, disappeared and reappeared, now beckoning him from a distance, now from close by. The trees swirled about him, danced together. Behind them black men crouched, malignant and watchful. They sprang up, glided towards one another, rushed forward, formed black, tangled masses. He sought to untangle them. Elusive, they fled away, danced round the bushes, screamed and shouted. On, on he drove, and behind him something heavy and lifeless bumped stupidly at the bottom of the cart. That dead mass of flesh, a human body gone putrid, an offence to all human senses, followed inevitably his

mad and hapless way. It was only the ordinary corpse of a woman who had lived and died sadly, meanly, and without love. But it was enough to send a man mad, to keep him pushing forward without hope and without reason.

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Some six hours after Olsen had left the farmstead Harris arrived with the doctor. There the half-caste girl told them the news of the death of the mistress, and told them how Olsen had set off with the body towards Cue. They had at once driven back to the town, where they expected to find Olsen already arrived. There they waited in expectation all that day and the following night. The next morning Harris started off for the homestead to see if by any chance the missing man had returned. He found no one there, and now, feeling considerable anxiety, he saddled another horse and rode all the way back to Cue. It was evening when he approached the town. Just on the outskirts he saw a small group of men gathered about a cart. One of the men hailed him. They seemed serious and excited.

"It's young Olsen, just come in. He must have got bushed. He's in a bad way. He doesn't look as if he'll live." Then he added in a confidential whisper: "The body is in the cart. It will have to be buried at once." Harris pushed his way to the centre of the group. Olsen was supported in the arms of a man, who was washing his blackened and distorted face. Harris bent over Olsen and spoke his name. The sick man opened his eyes, and for a moment reason came back into them.

"She must be buried amongst white people," he said. "I promised her that. She made me promise." Then his eyes wandered in a dull and meaningless stare. "She is only an ordinary corpse."

An Essay in Cubes

By James Stephens

It must have occurred to many readers that our novelists are peculiarly heartless people: they have no bowels of compassion, or, at least, they have only an appendix of compassion. I do not mean that they brutally outrage their readers' sensibilities—there might be a virtue in that, or an honesty to leaven our repugnance with respect—but the horrid self-revelation of many writers, masked as it is by the current fashion in ethic and religion, is quite unconscious, and should hold many of them to the scorn of their readers if their readers knew how to read.

To know how to read is to be critical, but it is singular how few have learned to read between the lines, or under the words which have been written. In every book there are two stories—one is the tale which has been written for the reader, the other is the story which the writer has not been able to keep out of his pages, and which, even in his own despite, will be the truer history of the two, and ought to be the more interesting part of any book.

On looking at a picture one may say: this is the picture of a field; and, having said so, may suppose that justice has been rendered to both the picture and the painter; but the person who has seen only the presentation of a field has seen the least part of the representation—the thing to be looked for in any picture is the painter; and the personality behind a story, a poem, or a piece of music will be the only really interesting thing to a critic.

The fact that there have been so few true readers is responsible for the further fact that a great number of those who have engaged, with credit and fortune, in the arts have had few qualifications to be listened to, for the evidence of their personalities as portrayed by their brushes or their pens show them to be immature human beings.

We can examine the psychology of a writer easier than

we can that of any other man. His coin is words, his currency is in every man's pocket, and can be rung on every man's counter. In his work is unconsciously precipitated the content of his mind, and from it can be gathered the tone of his civilisation and the stage of his growth as a human creature; but no man's mental coin or paper is ever questioned in fiction, and our very habitude of words has left us curiously ignorant of their weight. Judged as human beings, or as intelligences, the greater number of those writers who are named "masters" will be found to be very unmasterly persons indeed, and, saving a certain technical excellence, both they and their works are owed only the scantiest reverence.

It is matter for astonishment how mediocre is the intellect which the best of these writers will display. The masters of fiction have seldom risen above the level of an after-dinner speaker who has ascertained his own glibness and the silliness of people who have dined, and who knows that it is seldom necessary to give of his best, even if he had it. The thought of these men does not often rise above banality: from them you will get no winged words: they will not show you the other side of the moon, but they will show you and tell you everything you have already seen and heard, and they do this with the rarest possible agility.

A notable example of the after-dinner writer who has attained to fame is Fielding. The unceasing worldly-wise chatter of that author is loathsome to me: he will say (pleasantly, I admit) what every other after-dinner speaker would have said upon the same incentive: the tone of his conversation never departs from the walnuts and the wine, and it is nightly paralleled by any barrister or doctor whose tongue is loosened by the easiness of his companions and the adequacy of his food. The fact that Gibbon considered him so monumental a personality is sufficient to render Gibbon suspect also, and Gibbon is suspect upon precisely the same grounds as Fielding is —they are both glorified mediocrities.

One thing you may get from them—it is humour; and, in this contact, humour may be defined as the last refuge of the intellectually destitute: it has been used to cover every sin of stupidity and vice which the world has known. The idea that a witty man must be intelligent is not true,

for the witty mind is the most banal thing that exists. Much of the wit to be found in books is no more than a technical device which can be learned in a few lessons by any person willing to undergo the labour of "getting up" three or four formulas and of practising these diligently for a week. The art which has lasted has never been witty; the books which have lasted are not humorous in the accepted sense; the songs which time and the unconscious selection of our forefathers have sanctified for us are not comic. Indeed, many writers do not know that humour is anything other than the formula which they have discovered or copied; but although humour can so easily be counterfeited, it is not at all the linguistic accomplishment which so many people consider it. It is a tone of mind, and unless a man's humour be different from every other man's, then it is counterfeit. But in fiction, as in our music-halls, humour has been standardised, and is now the most vulgar part of our public equipment.

Humour is popular because it flatters the vanity of the least intelligent section of society; it makes them think that they are thinking, and, than this, there is no delusion more dear to the heart of a fool. At the root of popular humour is an intellectual snobbishness which thinks that in seeing a joke it has performed an exceedingly complicated mental action, it has squared some circle; but every music-hall performer knows that if his jokes depart from drunkenness and sexuality, they will no longer be intelligent to his clients—the reason being that in drunkenness and sexuality any fool is as wise as any philosopher. The writers of fiction have this knowledge also, and that is why they are humorous.

A book may be bathed in humour, but it may not drip of it, and too many of our writings are heavy with this mentally indigestible condiment. At the last, humour is intelligence, and intelligence is religion, and religion is self-consciousness.

Just as many artists are no more than animated photograph-machines which project rigorously the inessentials of something seen but not visualised, so many writers have been phonographs, and they have authoritatively reproduced the most banal ideal of their day floating in a solution of the then-current scientific small-talk. A writer

may be judged by the variety of his matter and by the subjects he makes his characters talk about. In nearly every instance they speak of matters which are too volatile for the solid permanency of print. They may have considered that they were justified in doing this because the very ordinary people they portrayed spoke about very ordinary things, and they may claim that their business is to portray life as they see it and hear it. If they make this defence, they must accept the description of phonographs instead of intelligences; their duty is to see the external world not with their eyes but with their minds, and to pass it through that crucible before they reproject it; but if they are unable to digest their vision, we are entitled to inquire why they remain in an intelligent profession. They were interested in these ordinary people only because they were incapable of being interested in anything better. "As our aspiration, so is our inspiration"; and the vulgarities of a book are always the vulgarities of its author. There never is an exception to this rule. We reproduce ourselves: our characters live and move on our own mental plane solely: they are our brothers and sisters, not in consanguinity, but in the deepest sense that any relation is possible to living creatures. Every book written is the creation of incest.

The most valuable critical remark I have ever heard was said to me by A. E. thus: All true poetry has been written on the Mount of Transfiguration—(poetry is the base of and contains every other art). The only subject in which a competent writer should engage is one showing the growth of a soul to some maturity; the subject chosen by almost all novelists has been the progress of some male or female person towards matrimony. They have never heard of the Mount of Transfiguration; and if they had heard of it, they might not have understood what it meant. Their whole conception of life is physical, and when they try to look upwards, which is inwards, they cannot see heaven because of the red haze in their brains; still, they are brothers to the wolf and the vulture, and their minds, like the dens of those others, are filled with gnawed bones. Blood is implicit in their pages. How this person strangled or shot or stabbed that person in order to couch himself beside some perfectly unimportant female!—it is their

theme; and in their pages also the scientist, if he wishes, may search for the beetle and the bat.

Ultimately the novelists are the critics, and if they understood their own business there would be nothing to urge against them in the dual capacity. They have judged one another's work, and out of their massed judgments a standard of value has been erected which is the present classical novel; but the classical novel has not been good enough to take rank seriously as a work of art: the slovenliness of expression and the mediocrity of thought has been concealed under the veil of a humour which has to cover a greater multitude of sins than even charity can. It is their real sin that the novelists have seldom been artists; few, indeed, have tried to shape their work with the loving patience which a good painter would give to his picture. We are invited to admire their six thousand words per day, but we will refuse to do so. They do not understand the artistic value of words because they do not often read poetry. They seem to fancy that an adequate statement of a fact or event is all that is required of them in the way of art, and so they write in order that those who run may read. Mere practice in writing will give to the average person this facility, but it will not give anybody a style, and style itself will not redeem a writer from the condemnation of a philosophic critic who demands an heroic soul in addition to the facile drums and trumpets.

The term objective, as applied to art, has only a temporary significance, if it has any. It is too usually considered that an artist is one who projects himself into external phenomena, and transcribes it. I am more inclined to believe that there is no such thing as objective writing in fiction, but in science there has been much, and it has paralysed science for centuries. The average scientific writers in every age have been the least scientific intelligences then living in the world. We will have no belief in scientists until we are assured that they are deeply read in poetry and are as deeply interested in the sacred books of the world; then we will know that they are really pursuing their *metier*, for poetry and the sacred literatures are the record of human progress. However curiously a scientist may regard a beetle, he can never record more than the catalogue of its physique and the menu of its

nourishment; if the beetle is ever to be discovered, it will be found inside of the scientist, and not outside of him. Progress is not towards a goal, but towards an experience, and there is no physical experience possible to a person over twenty-five years of age; after that term every experience must be mental. Humanity has not experienced anything for over one thousand years; humanity is not yet twenty-five years of age, and until women drink of their own breasts there will be no progress. Objective art—realism as it is usually known—has to be a failure, but I do not think there has been any. Man is a microcosm of the macrocosm; he contains or reflects all things, and the more he is a conscious being, the more clearly will he describe the gods or cave-men who are suspended in his own personality, but few writers of fiction have had the clear mental insight which justifies the title of "great." There is but one science in the world: it is psychology, and psychology can only be attempted by a fully-conscious being. One should not write a book for other people; there are no other people. A book should be written to clarify the mind of its writer and to prepare food for genius.

Many of our best writers have been incompletely developed people, or, rather, people who had only developed along one side of their nature. There are the writers whose outlook on existence is purely intellectual. Their novels are monstrous distortions of life; they see everything in terms of a logic which has no existence in fact; the plan of their books is mathematic (in the vulgarest sense), and the action of their puppets is developed like a problem in chess. These men make plots, and often very interesting ones, but their work has as little relation to life as has the sum in algebra which has been posed for a class of schoolboys.

Further, they are intellectual parvenus, and their work is too often vitiated by the extraordinary cold cruelty of the newly-wise. They write with their teeth and their claws; their aim is punishment; they demand and supply pursuing fates and furies; for Nemesis only do their altars smoke, and one imagines them squatting over their pens with the same cold glee with which a torturer of old might have gloated upon his brazier or his thumbscrews. George

Meredith does not belong entirely to this section, but, at times, the cruelty of his mind, as displayed by the treatment of his creations, is shocking, is hideous. He harried and tormented his Egoist more savagely than any savage deity could have done; he treated him as no decent man would treat another human creature; he never "let up" on him once. So, too, he hounded Richmond Roy through every kind of indignity into paralysis and death; he hunted many another of his poor devils with the same unremitting savagery, and he hid these crimes under a sparkle of humour exactly as every other writer of his terrible tribe has done.

Cruelty as an element in life is legitimate subject-matter for an artist, but the artist must not be guilty of it himself: the abominations pictured by Degas give honour to that artist; they are his terrible protest against the real villainies of existence, but the history of the Egoist is a fearful, unconscious self-revelation on the part of its author. In so far it is of interest to the critic; it will illumine for him many singular intellectual atrocities which are to-day as cruel as Degas's soldiers were some years ago; he may find in himself the mind that invented the Egoist and the hand that fashioned Beardsley's drawings, and when he has discovered himself he will be at peace for ever; but poor humanity may shudder to learn that its prophets are thus beaked and taloned.

Mr. Hardy has written cruelly also, but the cruelty is not in his mind, it is in his conception of life; and even in *Jude the Obscure*, that miserable book, one feels that he has stated a case which is as painful to himself as it can be to his readers. As an artist he is much better than Meredith, as a man he is immeasurably superior to him; but a pessimist is a man lacking in mental courage. This perpetual, unworthy complaint against life will deny to any writer the title of "great," and will further deny him the title of poet. No poet was ever cruel or timorous in his mind. Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, they depicted cruelty and timidity, but were dissociate from those; they took the reptiles from their dens and hung them against the eye of day, singing with all their power their great affirmations.

In the novels of Meredith, Hardy, and Mr. George Moore, the curious reader may trace a sufficiently curious

psychology. For many reasons Mr. Moore ought to have been the greatest writer of his contemporaries. He was a freer man; he was more self-conscious than the others, and, therefore, more open to the incitement of every kind of experience, but he had the misfortune to be born too soon. A very fine writer was spoiled by the fact that he was not born twenty years later. He came into a world entirely dominated by Charles Darwin and the theories of his time: a world absolutely reeking of the most matter-of-fact intellectualities, and he could no more escape from this environment than Meredith or Hardy could escape from the same stony preoccupations. None of these writers had the free minds of artists. The constant engagement of every artist is to dodge his own atmosphere: environment, which is everything to the historian and biographer, is poisoned air for an imaginative writer: imagination is in effect the escape from environment. How Mr. Moore bound himself down to the writing of novels like *Esther Waters* and *Evelyn Innes* is a miracle which one must continually deplore. His *Mummer's Wife* is probably the finest novel in English, but in *Ave* it seems to me he has only recently discovered how he would have written if Darwin had never been born. He has written some other person's masterpieces, and it is now too late to believe that he will ever write his own. Even so, the critical reader may gather from his books the record of a very curious personality.

There are those others whose intellectual being is rudimentary, but whose emotional faculty is in command. These are no less interesting than the others; and although every greasy crime of sentimentality and foolishness is to be discovered in their pages, one can lay to their credit quite as many virtues as the intellectuals can claim. Those who write with their heads only are cold, selfish, and opinionated: these ills cannot be cured; those who write from their emotional centres are only ignorant, and ignorance is a disease which can be remedied to some degree. "If the fool," said Blake, "would persist in his folly, he would become wise." The positive virtue of the emotional writers is that, while they seldom attain the technique of their more learned brothers, they do represent life more truly. It is singular how consistently they are on the side

of the angels: ignorance always is until it has been debauched by intellect, and, afterwards, when the intellect ripens into intelligence, it ranges itself again on the side which ignorance had already voted for. Emotion, even while it is most larded with folly, is very wise: its trouble is that it is not conscious; and until it is conscious, its own wisdom is obscured from it. Doistoifesky is an emotional writer, and, although few great novelists have sunk to his pits of banality, none have risen to the heights which he has attained. Scott, Dumas, Dickens are emotional writers, but no intellect ever bathed itself in such deep and limpid springs. With more intelligence all these men would have been great novelists, but none of them have any style worth speaking of, and seldom can one detach from their writings a reflection which may be generally applied as we can apply the maxims of Blake or Nietzsche, in whom emotion and intellect almost balance each other—which is to say that these two writers are artists.

It is the distinguishing mark of a great writer that both portions of his nature be developed: he must be a whole and single being, and he must think and write with his whole being. Success depends on the variety of one's inner life; a rich nature will give richly; a poor nature will be a man of one book, even though his personal experience be as varied as that of a musical comedy actress. Sterne was a man of poor nature; he gave of his best once. Borrow was more richly endowed than perhaps any other English fictionist (his fact and fable are seldom divorced); he gave abundantly, but, as he always felt more deeply than he thought, he gains a crown, but no sceptre; the same, in converse, is true of Samuel Butler and Mr. Shaw.

For these reasons no person should write biography but a competent critic, and he should refuse to avail himself of letters from or anecdotes about the person he is celebrating. His psychological analysis should be entirely based on the published works, the pictures, or the music of his subject; and his aim should be to release from the stories the character which is entangled in every page of them. The majority of people who write letters word them placatingly, almost as though they were seeking to mollify a possible enemy. The letters of many authors are composed of useless flattery or of matters which are important

in the very meagrest sense: they are no index to the ego; he is in his books, and we may pluck him therefrom as we pluck ripe fruit from a bush. A singular mixture he may be found when thus collected: a mess of lies and truths and half-truth; a mass of braveries and timidities, vanities and self-deceptions and sterling nobilities, often, to the casual gaze, a mountebank or a mediocrity, but, thereupon, the critic may set to and discover for us the buried titan. He need not recount for us the sins of his subject; we have committed them all ourselves, and sin now bores us. A man is the sum of his own goodness, and the residue of him is atavistic; therefore, whatever of magnanimity, of courage, of curious thought the critic can discover, these he may write for us in a good round hand. He should recollect that he is not celebrating a man, but a soul. We cannot be instructed at all about men: they are obvious; they are visible to the naked eye; but the best of us know very little about a soul, even when it is our own, and that is the quest of the critic.

The great novelist will for ever be less than the great critic. The novelist is the food-carrier to genius; the genius is the critic, and the critic, when he is truly competent, is the great poet. There has not lived one yet in the known history of man.

In reading verse, one should not seek all the time for verbal felicities; one should look for a little poetry, remembering that one can only take of anything exactly as much as one already has of that thing. We collect nothing; we fortify ourselves, and so become conscious. From our parents we may get physique, but no child resembles its parents in their mental or spiritual peculiarities. What has become of the children of Shakespeare, Milton, and the thousand lively emperors or bandits who went before and came after them? They have disappeared in public, but not private, obscurity. There are no parents and no children; that succession is only a political necessity in Nature's republic; we are the elder and younger brothers and sisters of each other, but when we have become conscious beings, we will inquire about our pedigree, and will be told that which we were never ignorant of. But ignorance has its positive, if temporary, side, and it is unpleasant; for when ignorance goes to school, the master gets whipped. Ignor-

ance and wisdom are both states of being which embrace completely their own time. We can be wise or foolish only in community, so Europe is getting ready to think—she has ordered more guns; and Asia is awakening also, for she has discovered that the sun rises in the west.

In regard to fiction, the word "genius" has been so constantly misapplied that it is time some protest was made. There has not been any genius in fiction; more, in the entire range of English prose and verse there is only one name with which I would couple the unique word as it is intended in this context. At his best (five pages, perhaps) Wordsworth was probably the highest product of English poetry, but he was not a genius; Shakespeare also, in despite of the multiplicity of his engagements, the ferment of his intellectual and emotional life, was not a genius. The only definition of the word which I can give is Blake's half-definition that "the crooked roads are the roads of genius." Shakespeare trod no crooked paths; there is scarcely (excepting archaicisms) a line of his which could puzzle a schoolboy or even an actor, although the latter does beg to be nonplussed; his theme is always the experience of average humanity: the appetites, the passions, these are his domain, and in it he rules imperially; but on mental life he seldom touched except in a few light epigrams or the aphoristic generalisation of ideas which had been current for generations before him. The only man who trod the crooked paths was Blake himself, and the critic who can garner Blake from his works will present his readers to the most astonishing personality in the wide range of English literature.

I make no mountainous claim for Blake as a poet, much as I love him, but he is still (as Fuselli said of him long ago) very good to steal from; and let it be conceded that theft is the first duty of man. The tone of his mind was too metaphysical for poetic freedom; he did not entirely escape the petrifactions of intellect, although he nearly did; yet there are few poets who are better worth reading and few men whom one will love and respect more than he. If he was not a great poet, he was nearly a great man. There was life in that mind, and he was tortured as much in his being as in his verse; his verse is as crooked as his paths; his life was crooked; his whole being had a divine twist

in it, and fame has curved away from him always. I think Mr. Chesterton once said that Blake was mad, and for that statement, if he did make it, dire and desperate pains are due to Mr. Chesterton.

Let it be understood that genius will not make any man a great poet or a great artist, for genius is not God; it will only make him different from every other poet and artist, but that difference will go to the bone and the soul, and with that difference genius has done all that it is able to do. Genius is really an evolutionary step, but, alas! Blake's marriage was unfertile, and his books are not read; there is always a wind to blow out a light, and humanity does appear to have lost its last box of matches—which is a silly thing to say, thank God!

Some Maxims and Reflections

By the late Professor Churton Collins

THERE are certain types of character—and they are to be found chiefly among women—which it is impossible to fathom, not because of the depth at which the bottom lies, but because there is no bottom at all.

In prosperity our friends know us; in adversity we know our friends.

Envy is the sincerest form of flattery.

There are certain types of human beings—and beware of them—to whom remorse is a luxury; they will torture their friends that they may torture themselves.

If we judged our friends not as they act towards us, but as they act towards others, we should be under fewer delusions in friendship.

Calumny is the tax which Fame levies on merit.

No man ever appreciated in others the merits which others have failed to recognise in him.

Never take into your confidence either a man whom you cannot praise or a man who will not praise you.

The world, like an accomplished hostess, pays most attention to those whom it will soonest forget.

There is no necessary connection between a man's abilities and his temperament, and one of the commonest causes of failure in life is the lack of correspondence between them.

In youth the Devil is in front of us; in manhood at our side; in old age at our heels.

We rarely receive anything for which we have not given, or are expected to give, an equivalent.

Weak and impulsive people may be, and very often are, sincere, but they are seldom truthful.

How many live—to learn, how few learn—to live.

There can only be one end to marriage without love, and that is love without marriage.

Half our mistakes in life arise from our feeling where we ought to think, and from our thinking where we ought to feel.

If the luxury of virtue be benevolence, the luxury of wisdom is irony.

There is nothing satisfactory in life but Employment; the rest is the prey first of Hope, next of Regret, and lastly of Indifference.

Success in ordinary life depends far more on negative than on positive qualities.

It is only an enthusiast who can understand an enthusiast.

The religion of the vulgar is admirably illustrated by a story which the late Dr. Allon used to tell. A certain tradesman saw the hand of God in all his prosperity. When a youth he was standing at a tollbar, and a gentleman who was passing through happened to drop a shilling. The youth put his foot on it, concealed it, and, when the gentleman had passed on, put it in his pocket. "That," he said, "was the first shilling that the Lord sent me, and He has blessed me ever since."

A wise man, like the moon, shows only his bright side to the world.

We are seldom philosophers till nothing but philosophy is left to us.

Humour in its higher aspects is the smile on Wisdom's lips.

Men are far less prone to imitate what they admire than to admire what they imitate.

If we escape punishment for our vices, why should we complain if we are not rewarded for our virtues?

In men vanity is a luxury, in women a necessity.

If men were as unselfish as women, women would very soon become more selfish than men.

There are two virtues which cease to possess us when we reflect on them—Chastity and Humility.

Envy and fear are the only passions to which no pleasure is attached.

It is not the senses, but what we deduce from the senses which deceives us.

It is much easier to take the intellectual than the moral measure of men.

To a little mind nothing is great; to a great mind nothing is little.

Of our foolish actions we generally know the consequences, of our wise ones not so often.

Nothing is more common than for men to be too proud to ask for help and then to abuse the world, in all sincerity, for not giving it. Misanthropy is usually traceable to this source.

We are no more responsible for the evil thoughts which pass through our minds, than a scarecrow for the birds

which fly over the seed-plot he has to guard; the sole responsibility in each case is to prevent them from settling.

Never claim as a right what you can ask as a favour, for there is not one man in a thousand who would not much rather place you under an obligation than do you an act of justice.

Women are always on the defensive.

We seldom forgive what we cannot forget.

To accept a favour from a friend is to confer one.

"I will give you," said a certain tutor of my time at Oxford, "all Theodicy in a nutshell. There is a pond and a duck. The Ancients said the pond was made for the duck; the Moderns say the duck was made for the pond; but the really wise man says there is the pond, and there is the duck."

Never trouble the waters in which you intend to fish.

The welfare of mankind is as much promoted by the mistakes and vanity of fools and knaves as by the virtuous activity of wise and good men.

Always mistrust a subordinate who never finds fault with his superior.

Distress and merit are not necessarily related, though no things are more habitually confounded; of all our affections pity is the most unreasonable and, with one exception, the most immoral.

Discernment may show us the folly of others, experience only can show us our own.

The natural bent of a weak character is rather towards virtues than towards vices, for there is less risk and more of the negative and neutral in the first than in the second;

indeed, most of the virtues which some people possess are attributable simply to fear.

Always distrust a man who assures you that he is to be trusted. No one who deserves confidence ever solicits it.

The most immoral of all professions is the law, and of this we have an interesting collateral and minor illustration in the fact that three Chief Justices, during the last hundred years, declined peerages, because their children were illegitimate.

The most exasperating and depressing object in life is a fool at whom you cannot laugh.

A woman who is confuted is never convinced.

Never look *up* to a man who looks *down* upon you.

A dash of the woman adds great charm to a man, but a dash of the man adds no charm to a woman.

In our dealings with our fellow creatures we often attribute to design, and invest with significant importance, what has really originated from mere indolence—a far more influential factor in human conduct and misconduct than is commonly supposed.

Most women would rather be admired than respected, and would prefer insult to indifference.

In women pity begets love, in men love begets pity.

Never ask an old man for his reasons, nor a young man for his conclusions.

Place no confidence in a man who is scrupulous about ritual in religion, for he is pretty sure to be either a hypocrite or a fool.

By mixing with the world we learn to take consciously

or insensibly our own measure; a man who is a recluse always thinks either too much or too little of himself.

To profit from good advice requires more wisdom than to give it.

We make more enemies by what we say than friends by what we do.

As stolidity is often mistaken for wisdom, so indifference is still more frequently mistaken for selfishness.

The devil is a good slave but a bad master.

Good nature on the part of others is particularly pleasing, because we generally interpret it as a tribute to our own merit.

We should always state our reasons for admiring and praising, but leave contempt to explain itself.

There is often less danger in the things we fear than in the things which we desire.

The great difference between historians typical of Ancient classical times and Modern—between Herodotus and Livy, for example, and Freeman and Gardiner—is that the former are true to the spirit of history, the latter to the letter; the first to the soul, the second to the body.

Though pride is not a virtue, it is the parent of many virtues.

A knave has commonly the honesty to despise those who respect him.

The most difficult people to impress are those who are most impressionable, and nothing so often masks obstinacy as complacency.

A fool often fails because he thinks what is difficult

is easy, and a wise man because he thinks what is easy is difficult.

In youth we are the dupes of our hopes, in middle age of our doubts, in declining age of our fears.

We are generally at home when the devil calls, but as generally abroad when God visits us.

It is fortunate for women that nature has made it impossible for their lovers to unite the ardour of eighteen with the experience of thirty-five.

If we wish to curry favour with superior men we should endeavour to impress them: with inferior men we should reverse the process, and induce them to suppose that it is they who have impressed us.

In explaining to us the motives for his actions a man may throw little light on his own character, but he indicates pretty clearly the estimate which he has formed of ours.

No woman has any confidence in herself till she has gained a lover.

Wise men are more dependent on fools than fools on wise men.

It is not because of what he has done, but because of what he may do that a bad man should be shunned. Of evil nothing but evil can be predicated, and both in degree as well as in potentiality it is an unknown quantity.

What attracts us in a woman rarely binds us to her.

Never trust a man who speaks well of everybody.

Hatred is importunate, but contempt can wait.

Religion with the majority of men is only a body of opinions having no relation to conduct and very little to principles.

Never trust a man either in business or in pleasure when you know a woman is behind him.

Time is a thief, but we are fools if we count his thefts.

It may be doubted whether we can ever love a man at whom we cannot sometimes laugh.

How many have lived to discover, as an old man once observed to me, that the wages of sin is—life.

How little serves to make us miserable, how much must combine to make us happy!

Success in life depends far more on energy than on wisdom.

Truth is the object of philosophy, but not always of philosophers.

If we were true to the best which is in us, we could dispense with the regret that we are not more perfect.

If we knew each other's secrets, what comforts we should find!

Virtue is enlightened self-interest.

Solitude is the nurse of selfishness.

The world will soon credit us with virtues if we can persuade it that we have no vices.

No man who feels strongly and thinks intensely can ever be consistent.

We have little reason to complain of the shortness of life when we remember what we have outlived.

Prosperity has a short memory.

Trust least those whom you should trust most, and confine belief to what is incredible.

SOME MAXIMS AND REFLECTIONS

In seeking truth we find ourselves.

It is fortunate for us that the birth of indifference commonly precedes the death of hope.

It is not possible for men of superior parts to be perfectly honest with inferiors.

Life is a dream to those who think, a terrible reality to those who feel.

The creed of Paganism was *carpe diem*, of Christianity *Memento mori.*

We can never be sure of others if we are not sure of ourselves.

Life

By Albert Kinross

GEOFFREY had come; so they were complete—the three sons of the house of Vigo, the daughter, the son-in-law, and their stepmother Lady Vigo, second wife to Sir Anthony Vigo, now dying in the room above. It was the first time the whole family had been together under that roof. All of them were there, even Geoffrey, who had been cast out, and Sir Anthony, who now lay dying. Geoffrey had seen nothing of them since he had gone away. Then Sir Anthony had not been dying, but very much alive. "Not in my house—not in my house!" he had cried; and Geoffrey had answered, "Not in your house and not even in your name."

To-day they were all together once more. His sister Ella—she had been a little girl and always frightened fifteen years ago, slender, in short frocks, with trim brown legs in trim brown shoes and stockings. Sir Anthony had bought her an earl—the gentleman over there who began to say things and never finished them. Rather expensive, Geoffrey reflected, now that he had seen him. His two brothers, Merrick and Timothy—they had been schoolboys then, timid and given to seeking shelter behind himself. Both were in the firm, had taken the chances that he had refused. He was glad he had refused. Merrick, the elder, seemed smothered, the youth knocked out of him and nothing definite to fill its place, with his long black coat and gentle, hesitating way. Timothy was unhappy. You had only to look at Timothy to see that he was unhappy. His stepmother, Lady Vigo, Geoffrey had never met before. She, like the Earl and his father's baronetcy, must be a later acquisition—a young woman, handsome, well-bred. Geoffrey felt sorry for her. She moved there like a ghost lost among strangers, as though in her heart she were repeating: "What are all these Vigos to me or I to them?" Sir Anthony, dying in the

room above, was the sole link that held this little group together.

The cloak of conventional sorrow that muffled all their voices seemed actually real; created, indeed, an atmosphere infectious and profound. Were they, then, really sorry? thought Geoffrey, looking into the half-strange faces, hearing these whispered words and the conventional answers and questions that passed between him and them? Were they really anything but pale reflections of Sir Anthony's will? They were his brothers and his sister, and not one of them had had the courage to seek him out before to-day. Sir Anthony had put a stopper on that, and they had obeyed. To-day they had sent for him. Sir Anthony had commanded that, and again they had obeyed. A glimmer of contempt came into his eyes, and then one of pity. Had all these people trembled before that powerful old man? He supposed they must have been well paid for it; or were they too weak and too helpless to revolt?

"Sir Anthony said you were to go straight up to him"; it was Lady Vigo who was addressing Geoffrey now, quietly and like a woman who has a duty to perform; "that I was to bring you."

Geoffrey was ready.

He followed her up two thickly-carpeted flights of stairs into the great bedroom on the second floor.

There was straw all down the street outside, so it was quiet here.

"Leave us," said a voice from the bed; and Geoffrey caught his father's eye fixed on him, already fixed on him as though Sir Anthony had been watching, waiting, till he came.

"And you, too." The same voice—this time to the nurse in her neat uniform.

"But the doctor——" the nurse began.

"I'm my own doctor, woman. Out you go, after her ladyship! I want my son."

Geoffrey and his father were alone.

The older man held out a hand. "Take it," he said. "You've done without it all these years. You've beaten me. I had three sons, but you're the only one that's beaten me."

Geoffrey took it, and the hand drew him to a chair.

"Sit down close beside me, so that I can see your face."

Geoffrey and his father were eye to eye at last.

"You've gray in your hair," said the older man, "and a jaw something like mine; you were a boy the last time, and had the eyes of a woman; now—am I changed, too?" he asked.

Geoffrey was silent.

"You don't speak," said Sir Anthony.

"Why did you send for me, sir?"

"Ah!" and Sir Anthony came back to this great room.

"How do you know I sent for you?" he asked.

"You sent for me."

"You're my son, and I can do what I like with my own."

"I'm not your son," came coldly from the younger man.

"I know; your name's Duke now—Geoffrey Duke. Your mother's name. Egad, she was a woman, Geoff; not snow and ice like that cold slut downstairs! You took your mother's name."

"I had a right to that."

"You've a right to mine, and the title and the land—you're the eldest," and Sir Anthony waited.

So this was why they had sent for him.

"My name's Duke; we settled that a good many years ago."

"Pig-headed, eh?"

Geoffrey sat like bronze.

"Pig-headed, eh? The same as me," said Sir Anthony; "I'm a good hater, too. But now—now there's no need for hate. I shall be gone as soon as this is settled. I've hung on for this. I want the name to go on—you're the eldest."

"There's Merrick and Timothy."

"They're no good. They're frightened of me, like that cold slut downstairs. You were never frightened. That's why we fell out."

"My name's Duke, and Duke it stays," said Geoffrey, rising.

"Fix your price—and sit down."

Geoffrey sat down.

"I have no price," he said.

"Won't you do it for money?"

"Money's no good to me now—ten years ago—twelve years ago—not now."

"You're rich now?" asked Sir Anthony.

"Comfortable."

"Ten years ago—twelve years ago—you weren't comfortable?"

"Uncomfortable enough to have a price."

"Starving?"

The younger man nodded.

"I've starved, too," said Sir Anthony. "Where did you sleep?"

"In parks."

"I always had a bed—some sort of a bed. I beat you there."

Sir Anthony changed the subject.

"I faced it. What did you do?"

"Faced it."

"Took rotten pay, and grinned—and moved on?"

The younger man nodded.

"And then you saved a bit?"

"Nothing to speak of."

"Beat you again," chuckled Sir Anthony; "you wasted time?"

"Time was cheap, sir."

"Time's never cheap."

Geoffrey did not dispute the point.

"And then you had things to sell, and you sold 'em?" pursued Sir Anthony.

The younger man nodded again.

"I sold mine, too—and things that weren't mine."

"You wanted to sell me—and I wasn't yours."

"I sold your two brothers, landed the firm with them, and there they are."

"And when you've gone?"

"They'll stick to it; they've shares enough. They can't get kicked out—unless they sell."

"They'll sell," said Geoffrey.

Sir Anthony changed the subject.

"You found a market at last?"

The younger man nodded.

"You took their prices at first, and then made them take yours?"

Again Geoffrey nodded.

"They had to take 'em or go without?"

"That's it," said Geoffrey.

"Where did you learn it?" asked Sir Anthony. "Not at Harrow, not at Oxford."

"In the same place as yourself."

"In the world, eh, Geoff? That was my school and my college. One has to learn that in the world."

Geoffrey waited.

"Your two brothers haven't learned it yet; and they're in business. They're in the firm, directors—though I do most of the directing. They sign my cheques for me, Geoff, and get in the way, and haven't the pluck to give a straight yes or no."

Still Geoffrey waited.

"Why don't you lend a hand?" cried Sir Anthony. "I'll make it worth your while. You're a man. I beat you in two places, eh, Geoff? But you're a man, my own flesh and blood, for all your airs and coldness. I know a man when I see one. Why don't you lend a hand?"

"I've my own work."

"How much do you make at it?"

"As much as I want to make."

"How much do you want?"

"That depends."

"Wife and kids, eh?"

"Exactly."

"A boy?" And Sir Anthony waited.

"Two."

"I thought as much."

"And?"

"One of 'em will take my name when he finds out. He'll only have to put out his hand. I've made provision for that. My name and the title and the places—when he finds out. Deep, ain't I?"

"He won't find out."

"Egad, but I'd make him—if I were strong again!"

Sir Anthony changed the subject.

"You're well known now?"

Geoffrey nodded.

"I've heard of you these five years, and seen your portrait in the papers—Geoffrey Duke—my son Geoffrey Vigo!"

"Did you tell anybody?"

The older man reflected. "No."

"I didn't either."

Sir Anthony changed the subject yet again.

"Look here, Geoff. I kicked you out because you wanted one thing and I another. I said, 'He'll come back as soon as his belly pinches'; and so I kicked you out. . . . You said you'd be a painter. I said iron and steeel and Vigo's Foundry for all who have my name. I had made the firm; it was the work of my life; it was waiting for you—fortune and reputation for the mere handling! You were a fool. You said you were going to be an artist. 'Be an artist,' said I; 'but not here, not in my house'; and you went away. You've stayed away—I grant it. You've come back at my request—I grant it. You've succeeded; you've done what you set out to do; you've beaten me—I grant that. You're a man, Geoff, in spite of your trade—I grant that, too. I thought artists were fools; I thought they were spongers and lap-dogs, hangers-on who shirked honest work and amused the women. Some made money—I knew that. But so do fiddlers and men who sing at the opera, and actors, and all that trash. The women—they amuse the women. 'None of that for my son!' I said. . . . You went away, and after ten years I heard of you. You had come to the front without any help from me—your own doing. There must be something in the fellow, I said. He's come through the ruck; he seems to be making a name for himself. There must be something in the fellow, I said. I've seen some of your paintings. I didn't look for 'em, but I've seen 'em—portraits of men—good, straight, honest work. 'He isn't a lap-dog, after all,' I said. . . . I began to respect you, Geoff. You'd done something. Merrick and Timothy—they'd had all the chances that you and I had never had, and what had they done? Shoved me out of the firm as I would have done had I been in their place? Fought me for halves, and then the lot? Sponged on me, Geoff! Sponged on the firm, taken my name, and spent my money!. To-day

I sent for you. I've been a long time over it, I admit. I wanted to shake hands and make it up, Geoff. I wanted you to use my name again. I've made my will that way. If you take my name and keep my name, and no name but the one I gave to you, you get the land and the houses. I can't keep you out of the title; but the land and the houses—I can keep you out of that. Without my name you don't get an acre, and your children and your children's children don't get an acre; but with it you're rich—rich enough to burn your paints and brushes and pay the whole Academy to do your work for you. . . . I thought you might be a man, Geoff, because you'd succeeded in spite of me. That took some doing—I know it. And now I've seen you, you're no fool; you're not like a fiddler or a pug-faced tenor; you cut your hair and wear your clothes like a gentleman. I know one when I see one. I'm proud of you, Geoff. You're a man, and, though you paint and daub—by Gad, you're as good a man as I am, doing real work!"

"Better," said Geoffrey. He had been silent up to now.

Sir Anthony looked at him through half-closed eyes.

"Better," said Geoffrey; "I'll tell you why I am better. Can you stand it?"

"Go ahead," said Sir Anthony.

"Twice just now you said you'd beaten me. Once because I'd slept in parks and you had always found a bed—'some sort of a bed'—those were your words?"

Sir Anthony nodded.

"The second time it was because you'd saved and because I hadn't?"

"I did beat you there," added Sir Anthony.

"Not quite. I beat you both times—if you can listen—if it won't tire you?"

"Go ahead," said Sir Anthony.

"Do you know why I slept in parks, while you had always found a bed—some sort of a bed? *You'd taken my bed—done me out of it.* Nobody ever did you out of yours. That wasn't quite playing the game. It wasn't fair. I had to begin life over again. You just went on from your Harrow and your Oxford. Nobody kicked you out; you

weren't forced to start again. I was—and I've come through. Nobody stole your bed, but you had stolen mine. You didn't beat me there, but I beat you. . . . The second time it was because you'd saved. You were giving me a thousand a year when you kicked me out, and I made debts on top of that, and you didn't care much whether I made 'em. We could afford it, you said. 'As long as you don't marry a ballet-girl, I don't care what you do, Geoff,' you used to say. . . . Well, you didn't start with a thousand a year and debts. So that was hardly fair either. But that's not the point. I'll tell you why I didn't save. Whenever I had any money I put all my eggs into one basket, painted a picture, and starved and worried till it was sold. Had you ever the pluck to do that? When I was sleeping in parks, my 'Bridge-builders' was hanging in the Academy. It was a month before they hung it, and another two months before they sold it. I'd put all my eggs into that basket; and the man who bought it had to find me first. I had three stale crusts—one dry and two wet—in my pocket the day I met him, and a hundred and fifty guineas when we parted. And again I put all my eggs into one basket, and again and yet again. And then a man paid me four hundred guineas for 'Sunday,' and I was safe. Had you ever the pluck to do that? . . . Ten years ago, twelve years ago—if you had sent for me then! I had my weak moments when I'd have taken money, even from you! Do you think I enjoyed it? . . . You saved and gave yourself a dozen chances; but I came through without saving, and taking twenty times your risks! I think I beat you there again, didn't I?—even though you said I'd wasted time. Time was cheap, I answered; you said, 'Time's never cheap.' *My* time was cheap, and a time of suffering's never wasted—but that you'll hardly understand. . . . I've beaten you all through, first and last and in the middle; I'm a better man than you are, 'doing real work.'"

Sir Anthony was listening.

"My work's been real enough to me and several other people. And now you ask me to change my name, to throw away the name I've made for one that isn't mine. Would you change yours to Duke now? Not for all the titles, all the houses, all the land in England! Would

you change Vigo to Duke?"—and Geoffrey paused. "I won't change mine to Vigo," he said, rising.

"That's your last word?" now asked Sir Anthony.

"First and last."

The older man nodded.

"You're right, Geoff," he said, "but I'm right, too; and when both parties are right, there's only war or death can find the answer. It's so among nations. It'll be so between us. You're a pretty easy victory, me lying here. I've offered you everything, and you've refused everything. Give us your hand, Geoff. I've done all I could."

It was a long clasp that followed, almost as though Sir Anthony were holding fast to life and must collapse the moment Geoffrey left him.

There was a knock at the door.

Lady Vigo entered, and father and son now drew apart. The nurse was close behind her.

"The doctor is here—he's been waiting," said Lady Vigo.

"Send him in," replied Sir Anthony; "there's precious little he can do for me. Good-bye, Geoff," he added. "Perhaps next time we'll stand a better chance. We've rather made a mess of this one."

Lady Vigo was about to follow Geoffrey from the room, but Sir Anthony kept her back. "Stay here, Caroline," he said. "I want you. I don't want to see any of the others, but you can stay."

Geoffrey went out, down the two thickly-carpeted flights of stairs, to the library, where he and his brothers and sister and brother in-law had met before. They were still there, still subdued, hushed, expectant, and whispering, as he had left them.

The Earl had lit a cigarette. He had given up trying to talk, and had retired to a deep leather chair and his meditations. He was obviously very tired of it all. Geoffrey's entry he hailed with a sigh of relief.

"Made it up with the old man?" he asked, brightening.

Geoffrey's answer could have been taken either way.

"So you'll be second baronet?" pursued the other.

"No, Merrick can be that."

Merrick, slow, deprecatory, made a movement. "But why, Geoff," he murmured; "and now you're here?"

"Nobody knows I'm here, or knows of the connection but yourselves. I won't put in any claim."

"But we——" Timothy began. "We couldn't take it."

"You take all you can get, my son," said Geoffrey, smiling. Timothy was still "the kid" with him.

"Won't we see you again?" asked Ella.

"Not unless you particularly want to," said Geoffrey.

"Of course we'll want to," said the Earl; and, as if the thought had escaped him, "Rum lot, you Vigos," he added at large.

Lady Vigo interrupted them. She was very pale.

"The doctor sent me away," she said. "We are to wait. He'll be down presently," and she sank into a chair. All her strength had gone from her.

There was silence now for a space, as though they all felt that impending calamity had moved nearer to them, had come down from the great bedroom on the second floor and found a way into their presence; was no longer remote, intangible, afar, but here, in this very room.

An air of gloom and mourning was already on them, and, in its shadow, none dared speak. The spell even embraced Geoffrey, seeking an opportunity to take his leave and go back whence he had been summoned. None came to him.

The doctor joined them.

"It's all over," he said, slowly.

Ella was weeping; Lady Vigo was deathly white; and Geoffrey, looking round that rich, warm room, with its padded chairs and stately bookcases, was shaken by a swift and fulgent intuition. Ella's tears were tears of joy, as though a will had suddenly been given to her, as though life had opened at her feet at last! And Merrick, too—in his eyes was there not that stealthy something which precedes release? And Timothy—small, fragile Timothy—his gaze seemed fixed on some point outside that was anything but Vigo's Foundry!

To Geoffrey standing there, the old man's death was a signal. Merrick would throw away his long black coat and hesitations, and be some quiet, kindly settler in the country, growing roses and bothering his head about "the people"—he had that form of mildness stamped all over

him. And Timothy would stoop in a library of his own now. He had always been studious, even taking a pleasure in his lessons. He had the face of a scholar and a bookworm. Ella and her Earl would do as they pleased, and play at life with no remonstrances, no awkward quarters of an hour such as the one now irking them. How the Earl must have hated his new connections—even at a price! And from them Geoffrey turned to Lady Vigo. A change had come over her pale face. A new beauty touched her cheeks with a faint rose and put a strange light in her eyes, as though, instead of "What are all these Vigos to me or I to them?" she were repeating, "I am thirty-three—seven more years in which I can live and love and lose myself; seven more years of youth—oh, seven more years!"

And in himself, try as he might, the infection ran its course. His work, real enough—what was it compared with what he might do once the need of money were removed? The dull portraits he turned out that made their three hundred guineas; the half-explored subject-pictures or landscapes painted to meet a date, one eye on varnishing day, the other on his theme—were these his limit? Had all his mastery been revealed? He had to live, to meet concession with concession. He had to work for a public, for prestige and the dealers, as much as for his art. He was tied to London, to his market, to the big house and studio that cost so much in rent, to the hundred extravagances of an incomplete status and position. . . . Geoffrey could not escape these thoughts; they were stronger than he was.

From the stricken field of death had come forth life and promise in abundance. Such death as this was life; was the key that opened life's choicest doors, the rod of magic that evoked it. The wizardry had passed into Geoffrey's veins as well.

"You are the heir?" The doctor was addressing him.

"I am," said Geoffrey.

"Compel Them to Enter In"

If knowledge is the ignorance or negation of evil and goodness, therefore, reality, then evil [or the tears of things], which is obviously its antithesis, may be accepted as the *unreality*. It carries us a long way forward, this definition of good and evil, far beyond Kant who "stuck" at a little divinity, beyond Nietzsche, the poet-egocentric; carries us in fact, into a fairway of pure reason where there is neither authority nor revelation. "Glory to man in the highest! for Man is the Master of things." Yes, it was Swinburne who anticipated Croce with these proud words, discredited enough in his time, but now surely coming into his own.

Nothing in history (if, indeed, history has any other nobility of interest) is more astonishing than the slow process of man's evolution towards the spirit and consciousness of his own individuality, the unceasing battle for freedom of thought, that he has waged against the forces of darkness—the authority and incubus of ignorance! And though they don't teach these things at the schools and we only learn them when we have sold our primers and emerged from the tutelage of the ecclesiastics, we are able to see now with an ever-clearer vision that man is the master of the world, even as the beautiful concept of Christianity, commemorated in the words, "Faith, Hope, and Charity" is recognised to be self-contradictory, fallacious and so meaningless. By faith, the Church meant authority, which is the synonym of force, as by Hope it meant the fear of punishment, and by Charity submission; and what that meant we know from the notorious "Edict of Faith" which enlisted the people in the service of the Inquisition and made ignorance a religious duty.

In the realms of speculative thought, at any rate, this mental tyranny has gone. Geology, zoology, anthropology,

a little education, cheap printing,—in the crucible of science, in the alembic of freedom, infallibility has lost even its definition. Bit by bit man has freed himself from the old dogmas and superstitions, from the intellectual aphasia of Biblical tradition, from the Lucifugæ who held him prisoner. And since the only conceivable activity of God lies through humanity which, alas, man knows now to be only too fallible and finite, so to-day we are content rather with what stuff of the mind and conscience there is within us than with any spiritualism of a divinity actuating only through the possibilities of our mortality. We have returned, after all these centuries drenched with the blood of Christian controversy, to the free vantage-ground of the Greeks. Our minds are no longer captive. The Church and State are disestablished. Heresy sups with the Gods. It is no longer possible, west of Russia, for the Church to formulate a State policy on the inquisitorial text, "Compel them to enter in."

But though it is true that reason is gradually taking the place of religion in the modern world, which is to say that tolerance is ousting superstition, or that the intellect is dispossessing the soul, the victory of man's volitional freedom is still merely theoretic, and as yet only geographical. We have only to look around at the curious anomalies separating man and his governance, the anarchic, anachronistic state of economic and political Europe, to see how far the genius of man is removed from his tangible manumission, to use a sacerdotal word applicable hitherto to the intangible. It would not be exact to contend that the "heretics" have won to any acknowledged freedom of thought, or even to pretend that the potentialities of reaction and constriction are no longer with us. At most we can claim negational advance, the condition, that is, of inaction. If authority has lost its mystery, its rack and commination, its fires are still smouldering, like the Pit below us, and there are plenty of volunteers for the bellows.

It was Frederick the Great who bade men seek "their own ways to heaven," yet William of the military German Empire sits on the throne by the "divine right" of Kings, the most reactionary sovereign since the Barbarossas. If

young Italy is giving us the philosophy of Croce, the Vatican furnishes the Furlana. In Russia, the Ikon still blesses the pogroms of the "Holy Synod," and only the other day a learned professor was sent to gaol for criticising one of the "Holy" institutions. On all sides, gyves of old-world shibboleths and traditions, the leavings and "tattert-boggerts" of mediævalism, rusty as the chains of ghosts, propped up and perpetuated by the ceaseless iteration of their tattered tags and formulæ which not even their interested assessors any longer believe in.

The fact is man has got ludicrously beyond his machinery. As Christianity has been the greatest force in civilisation, so the collapse of it has cut the ground from under all his institutions and his theories and almost every credence that he possessed. The face of modern Europe is a Hydra of contradictions. Man positively has put Satan "behind him," even if he still enjoys a little of his mystery. On the one side, science, thought, freedom opening up a new world of truth and beauty, a world more astonishing than the imagination of romance, opening up the very Gates of the Heavens and the cosmic mysteries, on the other, the walls and barriers of old-time stratagem and sanction, maces and wafers, effigies and all the other relics of idolatry and barbaric divination, and below, the seething mass of slave energy and resentment, inchoate, ignorant, murmuring because, at last, awakening to the uses of that strange gift freedom which so unexpectedly has come upon it. The result is the result of every vacuum —we are feeling the draught. Like London's housing predicament, we are all held up because of the mediæval landlord system, because we don't own the houses we have to live in. There is so much to amend, reforms are so urgent, there are so many things we ought to see to—but we can't get on with them, because we are all held hostage by the mortgages of the past.

Though theological controversy has etiolated into a more or less "commissioned" apologia of ethics as issued from the Hohenzollern Court laboratory of Professor Harnack, though the cathedral bells are cracked and we are content to leave the solution of the discords in the

universe to the wise men in their wildernesses, our Calvary has in no whit become attenuated either in temporal or spiritual difficulty. The curfew certainly had its reason and its consolations. For one thing; man had not to think; the bell just told him it was time to go home, and it being dark when he did get home, there was nothing left for him but to go to bed. Acquiescence is an easy part. It is so simple to believe in others, so hard to believe in oneself. Man, gregarious man, is by nature a bondman. In the good old days a man had but to obey the lords spiritual of his time, and he had a fairly good time of it. Acceptance was the badge of his tribe; and he died as lightly as he was shriven.

To-day all this is very different, and yet very tremendously changeable. The grass seems to be growing on all the old places of Feudal England. Instead of feeling that all is well in the best of accidental worlds, we are all wondering at the ludicrous incompleteness of our hereditary systems, and devising preposterous schemes for overthrowing them. Having learnt to doubt, we have begun to consider. Being no longer afraid of death, we are beginning to study the æsthetic and economic values of life in the world that is, rather than in that which may be hereafter. All the while, great unploughed fields of life seem to appear overnight, stretching out behind our back gardens. There is no sacred thing left. Our cherished heirlooms seem no longer applicable. Wherever we look we find change, chaos, innovation, restlessness, a new England seeking, demanding, a little hysterical, and very young, struggling with its new volition and new outlets of activity.

Deprived of religion, the sanctuary of the domestic outfit—free, that is, from authority which in the case of women has throughout modern civilisation meant subjection, economic and ethical—for the first time in history woman has acquired the spirit of her own individuality, to claim co-equal rights with man. Nearer to earth than men—truer, that is, than man to the natural instincts of self-preservation and propagation—her entry into the public life has been characteristically unconventional,

according to all notions of usage and precept of shameless indecency. As usual, authority, prescient only of the calculable, has been taken unawares. Though the decline and fall of orthodoxy has been a slow process, visible to all save those who did not wish to notice it, and for some time past it has been evident that new channels for the liberated activities of women would irresistibly, and rightly, have to be found (since women are now playing an important part in the politico-economic system), no provision was made for the emergency, as no credence ever is attached to those we call prophets. It is true the ladies have behaved with unreasonable intensity, unreasonable because a hatpin revolution is necessarily doomed to impotency in any clash with the reality of force; but then woman is less fettered by theory or conscience and the empirical charters of convention than man, and, after all, "a fellow does what he can."

The modern Mænad, perhaps in particular the economic struggle-for-life English Mænad, is an ugly spectacle, and symptomatic enough not only of the chaotic conditions of the times but of her own mental instability. Apart from her æsthetic disagreeableness, however, she is no mere apparition out of a bottle or a hidden cupboard, but unmistakably a product of the age. The incidence of freedom of thought upon the subject sex is naturally far more revolutionary in its effects than upon the sex which always has claimed the right of such freedom, and in its own opportunities exercised it, since otherwise such freedom could not have come about; nor is their irruption upon the public conscience either so illogical or so wanton as may at first appear, seeing that the Furies of the militant movement are the descendants of the pre-Raphaelite ladies who festooned the libraries of Mill and Herbert Spencer and the incorrigible Ruskin, though it is possible they might have astonished Mr. Tappertit.

But, Cromwell, too, would be astonished if he could rise from the ground and see King Carson arming against the forces of Westminster, and probably more astonished than the would be li-li-bul-ero headless "Charlie." *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* Not quite, though we

may be tempted at times to think so. The shock, and the repercussion of the shocks which the women are providing us with, have certainly shattered the mirrors of our Fairy Tales, as any poor father can experience who, left alone to mind the children, tries to tell them the story of Beauty and the Beast. Yet we need not despair in a world governed by the law of average. The back of Venus will recover, and without a doubt her reputation will be considerably enhanced. Venus at least is safe, and so, through art, is the Magdalen. It would be a poor humanity without folly, nor should we forget that it was a man who pilfered the Mona Lisa. Tis part of the season's madness, to be duly provided against, just as it is necessary to protect the community from hydrophobia.

And if in England woman destroys a work of art, in France she shoots the detractor of her husband. The lesson is of equal value. *La tête humaine!* One might even call it the love echo of the sex, so curiously the pistol-shots of Mme. Caillaux seemed to give the answer from across the water to the epicene craziness of the Englishwoman, as if at the summons of retributory nature. Almost it seemed to redress the balance, to restore the rhythm of the sexes. So Venus avenges herself. So Cupid smiles through the tears of tragedy. And we feel that the powder-puff is greater than the word, and all our design is vanity.

If not a judgment, a portent.

There is an "iron Maiden" wonderfully fashioned with hideous spikes protruding in all directions with an ultimate drop of some hundreds of feet into a raging torrent still kept on show at Nuremberg, which the Home Secretary might have copied for use upon ladies of the type of Mary Richardson, but unfortunately the "Maiden" would not prove a deterrent to acts of lunacy any more than it did to protestations of heretical sanity in the times when it was in weekly demand at the instance of the Holy Church. Ultimately neither murder nor damaged Venuses are going to solve the question of woman's right of citizenship, nor here is it our concern. Noticeable and troublesome in all this protean insurgency, whether of wild women, or wild

labour men, or wild Irishmen, is rather the inadequacy of the control because of its utter inadaptability to the exigencies which are straining it. Our Party system is indeed paying the price of an over-prolonged old age. The real fact is that representative Government trends less and less to be representative of the best thought and culture of the age, even as it becomes more and more "popular" and so determinative.

Anyone who knows Continental conditions is aware of the general disillusion of what is called politics, the "slump" in political kudos, the rising feeling of public indifference and disgust which in France is known under the name of *menfichisme*, and in Germany finds expression in an impotent socialism. The reason obviously is not far to seek. Politics have come to be the playground of personal ambition, carrying with it individual advantages altogether disproportionate to the service, and a power which may be as dangerous as it is unphilosophical. Nor clearly is it a matter of party constitution, for we find the same discontent in Germany, where there are many parties, in republican France, and in England with our dual party system with but one alternative.

There is another reason beside the personal equation. It is that politics have become divorced from actuality, from the realities of the mind which should ennoble them. In England at this juncture the unreality of political life is conspicuously evident. It is no doubt because the machinery is too cumbersome, the executive too much an interest, the ponderabilia of formality and expression are too formidable, the reasons behind the reason too narrow; but more than all these causes there is the bedevilment of the "game."

Take the one question of Welsh disestablishment. Clear-thinking people are agreed upon the principle. Religion is a private affair. If every third Welshman likes to get up on a barrel and talk Scripture, like a revivalist, why in the world shouldn't he, so long as he confines himself to his own people? Outside the Church, few people are concerned with the matter, philosophically. But

politically it is otherwise. It is good party business, and so the rumpus goes on and Westminster frets and fumes, while hardly a parson in the old country can command a congregation.

It is much the same with Home Rule, again the heritage of a policy. On both sides there is weighty argument. Such a question obviously requires the touch of statesmanship—wise thought and conciliation rather than commandment, and some responsibility of contributory duty. We all know that Westminster is clogged, that to get the Irish faction reduced to its proper representation would be of enormous value to the public interest; on the other hand, there is the question of religion and the fact that the Protestants do not wish to be governed from Dublin; there is therefore a real grievance and an opposition. Such a question, if solved it must be, might at least be treated on certain business principles, but that is precisely what the politicians don't intend that it shall be.

It has become utterly impossible to understand the situation. "Compel them to enter in," they shout, and "we fight." Fight whom? Fight where? Fight when? Is there an answer, except in the party Press? What is Ulster afraid of? The priest?—scarcely, for it is admitted on all sides that Home Rule would destroy the rule of the priests in Ireland; and the dilemma grows when one studies the question to find the English Catholic passionately opposed to the Bill—which, if his animosity is justified, namely because he thinks it will liberate the peasant from sacerdotalism, automatically deprives the Orangeman of his argument. For evidently the Catholics are not so catholic as all that. But what does it mean? Are the English Catholics right, or is Mr. Devlin reckoning without his "host"? Plainly, one or the other, unless it is politics. Now the more one studies the question, the more one comes to the conclusion that political it is.

There should be no reason why Belfast should not be constituted a free state, like Hamburg and the German Hanseatic cities, as that every other Protestant county in

Ireland should be allowed to set up its own little autonomy, *cellula e cellula*, in part constitution of the British Empire. Unfortunately such a solution hardly seems possible, bigotry prevailing on both sides, though the example of Germany, good enough for the Insurance Laws, should suffice to reinsure upon. The beastly thing about it is that the Government cannot yield to opposition, because that would be bad politics, though it might be good statesmanship. Having accepted Mr. Gladstone's legacy, the Government must go through with it with what economy of blood it may. The question involved in Governmental subserviency to Ulster's defiance concerns the very foundation of our Party system. A Government which yielded to force would undermine the whole principle of our Constitution, which, with the Crown, rules simply by consent. If Ireland is to be made a trial of strength, there is no option but to put it "to the proof." A victory of the rifle, and we may any morning wake up to find ourselves a republic.

Whether that would matter or not, this is not the place to discuss. The point is the increasing difficulty of government in this country owing to the increasing range of man's social, ethical, and economic demands outside the operative sphere of politics and his consequent indifference or, rather, defiance of their authority, and the intrinsic weakness of the executive and of Parliament which, in the absence of a reconstructed Second House, finds itself in a continual state of broil and uncertainty, recrimination and party dependency in which opposition is the sole consideration. While the battles of the politicians go on, man outside is thinking and creating. He is free, he is interested in flying, in the great discoveries going on about him, in life, in reality. To-day, the Press hardly takes any notice of the doings of the House, and, in truth, the politician is a long-handicap man. It is natural enough. We no longer believe (philosophically) in authority because we can so very well do without it. Politics not being an honest endeavour—and by honest, be it clearly understood, is meant disinterested design and co-operation—but a condition of Party end, contrivance and machination in which religious fanaticism, class hatred, racial animosity, faction

interest, personal ambition and irresponsibility play necessarily a warring and disintegrating part, they are becoming more and more dissociated and disfranchised from the ideas and constructive thought of the time, and so from the ideals that they personify. As the conscience of society grows, as the civic sense of order, progress and responsibility widens, as the freedom of the individual commingling with the spirit and largeness of the age progresses ever to a higher scope, a truer view, a loftier dignity, and a clearer understanding, so man gets nearer to the reality of things, in other words, to himself. His interests are only too often not those of the politicians. If he is not one of a faction sufficient enough to influence a constituent, his voice remains unheard, and he has no redress or remedy. And strange to say, when the bills do get passed and great social benefits are conferred upon the people, it is the populace that cries out against them, as we have seen notably in the case of the Insurance Acts.

Why is this? Because of the sham and the blarney of the "game." Because the people know that their laws are not the result of scientific thought and provision, but curried from the mould of the Party pastry-cook. And to this there is the hot-gospeller, the fact that though spiritually the Church is a beggar, temporally it exercises still the greatest force in English political life, so that a Pedobaptist is more powerful than a philosopher. How this condition necessarily vitiates and stultifies the mental horizon of the people is illustrated quaintly by the law prohibiting plays dealing with politics or religion from the theatre, thereby reducing the stage of Shakespeare to the platform of a girls' seminary. Yet the politicians only jested when the entire intellectual life of England at last managed to secure a "debate" on a matter of such real moral importance to the country, and incontinently it was "laughed out." Can the politicians wonder that the thought and culture of England are wont to view with increasing diffidence an assembly of grown men thus submissive to hypocrisy? A man may fly to Jerusalem and back, yet on the stage is prevented from writing upon the two things in this country most worth writing about! No wonder Mr. Balfour entered for the tennis tournament at

Cannes, instead of supporting his chief in the great Home Rule discussions. No wonder, and no matter.

"Compel them to come in"—but the whole trend of modern thought is against compulsion. That is the difficulty of the present state of chaos and uncertainty. The politicians cannot free themselves from the old weapons; those outside have got too many new weapons. The discrepancy is very real. As the old forces of political energy, becoming more and more enmeshed in the coils of denominational, class, racial and Party recrimination grow atrophied and exasperated, palsied, and excoriated, and drift further away from the needs and demands, the thought and the spirit of the creative life of the people, so, it is to be feared, will the feeling of unreality, and so indifference, deepen, which is not to the benefit of the body politic. But "Damn-my-eye-ism" is a growing malady, if it is not already the measles of our civilisation. It is there because we are in a period of transition. Having chased away ignorance, Faith, or in other words, authority, knowledge has not yet provided us with a substitute. As respect has gone from men, so there is no longer any stay to their affairs. The new Freedom is, perhaps, a little too much for us.

To complain of our youth would be folly, nor is there any cause to. Never since the Elizabethan age has England been so real, more personal, or more strenuous. If there seem to be a good many new forces pulling in a good many new, different, and apparently conflicting ways, so much the quicker shall we shake off the shackles of our old buckram conventionalities, and the better go about our business.

The Breakfast

By Toson Shimazaki

Translated by Osamu Nakamura and H. P. Holt.

THE month of May had returned, bringing with it all the tender thoughts of Spring. Dull, routine work in an observatory—investigating atmospheric pressure, noting the formation of clouds, and taking the readings from various instruments—had grown painfully monotonous. Days slipped past on the heels of days, without one being fully conscious of time's pace.

But the chorus of croaking frogs in the neighbouring fields, and the genial warmth in the air, carried my mind back to other and happier springs. I had been a wanderer all my life. There were men to whom this would be the gladdest month of their existence. There is something about May which brings memories surging back to all but the most insensate of us. I ran my eye somewhat wearily over the charts which I had prepared, before going off duty, and explained the position to my colleague who relieved me. Then I left the building and walked slowly down the hill which was about eight miles from Zenkoji. The early summer sun was shining on the veranda of my house when I reached it. The beams peeped through the young leaves of a persimmon tree and fell on the white wall of a pawn-shop, opposite. In the garden the grass was growing more thickly, and the trees were showing signs of coming back to life after their winter of non-existence.

The odour of May assailed my nostrils—the smell of the green things. My eyes fell on the apple blossom, and I heard the sleepy hum of bees—my mind drifted back to other days when I had heard the same sound, and the same scent had drifted along the air, but with a different meaning for me. The thought of it made me sad, for I, too, had drifted, just as many another man drifts on the sea of life,

blown, willy-nilly, whichever way the wind chose to send me.

"If I were young once more and could live my life again"—I began; but such visions were folly. I was but a wreck that had floated here and there and was now on the top of a hill, isolated from the world, spending my days in observing the movements of clouds. Little did I expect, when I began the game of life, that I should ever find myself in such a position.

While I was absorbed in meditation I heard a voice at the gate and found there a man much younger than myself. He was travel-stained and weary. He began to talk in a low tone, resting his hands on the porch, and as he spoke, I fancied I saw two strangers—the man as he was and the man he might be. He told me he was bound for Tokio from Yechigo, his native province. He told me he was in search of his fortune. He was penniless, having fallen ill during his journey and spent the money he started with. For days he had struggled along, and although his feet were swollen and pricked with thorns, he had still many more weary miles to go. He begged pitifully for help.

"To tell the truth I have had no breakfast," he added. The sun was already aslant in the west.

The man's plight touched my heart. Gazing at him, I saw that his jaw was long and round—the jaw of a good-natured man. But on his sunburnt, perspiring forehead, and about his eyes, there was the mark of the man who had drifted and encountered dissipation. My mind flew back to things which I wished I could forget. I, too, had moved about aimlessly and stood at a stranger's door begging forlornly for pity.

"Take a seat, my lad," I said in a friendly tone, but he remained standing modestly, and I saw he was trembling.

"It is one of my firm rules," I observed, "never to give alms to strangers. I keep this rule on principle. It is contrary to the way of the world to give and receive nothing, for what one gives is the fruit of toil." While speaking I took a small coin from my pocket, and his eyes shone as I placed it in his hand.

"In this life," I added, "one soon finds that it is folly to rely on gifts from others. You have my deepest sympathy, for the road from here to Tokio is a long one, and

you cannot lessen it by a yard. I wonder if you will take my advice?"

He looked up at me curiously.

"I am older than you are and I have traversed roads which I hope you may never pass along," I added. "Your immediate salvation lies in work."

"Certainly," he replied, resting his forehead upon his hand. I observed the long, slender fingers.

"Probably you think it odd that I should speak to you in this way," I went on, "but my experience is behind me. I have passed through the stage you are now enduring. So deeply do I feel for you that it almost brings tears to my eyes. Only those who have endured hardship can realise the mental state of those who are in similar trouble. Have you not some accomplishment—singing or chanting sutras, for instance, or playing upon some instrument?"

"I have no particular accomplishment," he replied with a forced smile, "but I know something of the flute."

"Splendid," I exclaimed, beginning to see how his future might alter. "That will do admirably. Do you not see how it will help you? There are too many people endeavouring to exhibit something they do not possess; it would be foolish to conceal what you really have. Here, give me back that first coin. I will give you money—just sufficient to buy a flute. Get one, no matter how poor it is, and with it you will, on your journey, obtain an income which will provide you with food and shelter." I handed him the money and he thanked me warmly. His face clearly showed how grateful he felt.

"The future is a strange mystery," I said, "and yet to a large extent we develop our own lives. Some day, perhaps, I may find myself situated just as you are to-day. If you come to live in a great house and I stand at its door you, in turn, will show mercy to me."

"Ha ha," he laughed bitterly.

"Now go," I added, "and good luck go with you. Remember, you must not buy any food before you obtain your flute."

"You are right," he replied emphatically. "Never will I eat until I have earned with my flute the money to pay for food." He thanked me with both words and looks, and hurried away, apparently much encouraged by the gift.

I, too, was glad that I had been able to help a fallen fellow-creature.

May!—the month of sad reflections and gay recollections. Already my mind had reverted to my former thoughts when the servant girl, who had been drawing water from a well, returned and told me that as soon as the man left me he entered an eating house.

"I have had no breakfast yet!" I recalled his words—and smiled.

"The Melting Pot"

A "KOSHER" play is rather a novelty in London, and Mr. Zangwill, we know, is a Zionist. All the same, wit and propaganda do not make a play, for there is always this infernal question of technique, the bradawl of the critical kit-bag, which Bernard Shaw has twisted into a hammer. So much has been talked about it of late. It is so difficult to acquire. Unless a man has been a call-boy, he never can write a decent play, and so on, and now we have another example showing precisely the contrary.

It is true Mr. Zangwill's play is a little amateurish in technique—some of the curtains are fastidiously literary, there is a superfœtation of agony and sensibility, but that is the worst that can be said about it. If it is not a "critic's" play, it is an astonishingly interesting piece of work, and, not only that, it has the genuine quality of homilitic inspiration. The thing, in fact, is so strong, so quick with pathos, sincerity, faithful portraiture and revelation, that not to see it would be to miss one of the best theatrical productions of modern years; it is a notable, even beautiful, play. Mr. Zangwill has preserved his artistic balance admirably. Though his Jew, escaped from the massacre of Kichinef, musician and philosopher, is evidently the work of passionate sincerity and pleading and is created to enlist our sympathies for the miseries and disabilities of the race, Mr. Zangwill has not fallen into any sloppy sentimentality of conventionalised type and calculation (such as the immaculate boarder in *The Third Floor Back*), but rather, on the contrary, has presented him with all the weaknesses, the idiosyncrasy, the intensity of Israel, that unassociable tribe of Christian martyrdom. The result is a strangely clear-cut, logical, sympathetic and lovable character, unlike any figure in our English repertory. And that is the supreme merit of Mr. Zangwill's play. With a rare honesty, both of art and of purpose, the author has faced

life. There is no wood in his play, hardly even a concession. He has not been afraid to depict the old Jewish mother mumbling over her Bible, dancing with a false nose on the night of the Jewish carnival—a scene, and a curtain, this, of Aristophanic satire and realism—to show in all its petty narrowness and unpleasantness the fanaticism of Jewish physical custom and ritualism, the pathos and bathos of tribal bigotry and idolism, the tragedy of Ishmael in conjunction with its comedy.

And if he has been fair to his own people, so he has looked upon their enemies. The most interesting scene in the play is the confrontation of the young Jew with the Russian baron, the man who superintended the massacre of the boy's parents and relations—the father of Vera, the girl he is in love with. These Russians are not stage figures, or the puppets of situation. They, too, have their character, their strength, their courage, and in this delineation Mr. Zangwill has been singularly happy. When the Russian father hears the boy's words of horror, when he finds his own daughter, who had escaped from Siberia, reviling him for a "butcher" of innocents, when he sees the love uniting these two human beings, the Jew-artist and the girl-revolutionary, he recognises a force stronger than himself, a justice, a retribution. He hands the lad his pistol. "You are right," he says; "shoot me!" But the Jew can only stare at him in wonder. What use has he for a pistol? He picks up his fiddle and notices that a string is broken. "I must fit a new string," he mutters, and there the matter ends, as most things do end *par des chansons*.

The last act, no doubt, is rather an anticlimax after this scene, which has the depth of great drama, and, as a fact, serves but to wind the story up. Yet even this is alive with interest, for Mr. Zangwill has something definite to say, and all his characters are essential and self-revelatory. Taken as a work of art, *The Melting Pot* is a finer thing than Brieux's *Damaged Goods*, and far more arresting. If he comes forward with a *chose jugée*, his advocacy is sound and relentless. His Jew boy is a noble figure in drama, and it is played with a charm, a simplicity, and so complete an identification with its creative spiritualism that we are moved insensibly to both pity and

admiration. The whole performance is one of conspicuous merit, nor is there a dull moment. Technically, that is the secret of its strength. There is nothing artificial in its construction, not even in its propaganda. The play is not built up laboriously in scenes and situations—the situation unfolds itself. It moves forward because the story is natural drama springing coherently and so vitally from itself. If Mr. Zangwill had added another three acts, it probably would not have detracted from the effect. For these folk are interesting, and, moreover, they are allowed to be themselves. The Jews are real Jews, as the Christians are real Christians. Mr. Zangwill sees both sides, and, on the whole, does justice to them. He has done a very difficult thing intelligently.

This play once more shows the potential power of the stage as a pulpit, and how basely we are degrading it through its enforced limitation to the place of artificial post-prandial entertainment. No one can see this play and not realise the absurdity of our present theatrical censorship which indirectly has reduced our theatre to a mere wilderness of mannequins and commercialism. This work of Mr. Zangwill laps the pulse-strings of our humanity, refreshing as the "gentle dew from heaven." S. O.

How it Feels to be Blind

And a Way in which the Burden of Sightlessness can be Lightened

By C. Arthur Pearson

In beginning this talk to the readers of The English Review, I have to make a purely personal statement which I make only because it has a very direct bearing upon the really important part of what follows.

Some six years ago my sight began to fail me. I consulted specialists and, after trying in vain the effect of resting my eyes, underwent operations upon them five years ago, but to no purpose; for in spite of the best advice obtainable at home and abroad, my sight has since then continued to deteriorate steadily, and is now of little service. I can no longer read, nor can I get about without guidance, except in quite familiar surroundings.

We have all heard that "a fellow feeling—maketh wondrous kind," and the loss of my sight has led me to think a great deal of others in the same plight, but most of whom are not so fortunate as I am. For to have a fair supply of this world's goods does much to lighten such a burden as I have to bear. For example: I can re-visit beautiful and familiar places at home and abroad, and feel that keen joy which lovely scenery affords; for I am so lucky as to have a very retentive visual memory, and can still, in my own way, see beauties of mountain, lake, and woodland which are, in reality, only a memory. Reading is the one unfailing resource of the blind. We read with our finger tips by the aid of embossed type.

Braille—the invention of a Frenchman, Louis Braille—is the best system of this embossed writing, and by far the most prevalent in the British Empire. It was introduced into this country by that great blind philanthropist, the late Dr. Armitage, who founded the National Institute

for the Blind, of which I have lately become Hon. Treasurer.

The Institute exists mainly for the purpose of making books, magazines, and newspapers in Braille. It is infinitely the largest producer of these in the British Empire, and is the only one which does the work by machinery on a considerable scale. Many Braille books are produced by hand—some by blind workers, some by kindly sighted folk, but their work is, necessarily, very tedious, and the books made thus only begin to supply the demand which exists. In spite of the use of the most ingenious machinery which the wit of man has been able to devise, the process of making these books is slow, cumbrous, and costly—so much so indeed that Braille books cost many times as much as ordinary books, and the tragedy of this is that most blind people are very poor.

The new premises of the Institute at Great Portland Street, London, W., which were recently inaugurated by his Majesty the King, will, when finished and fully equipped, enable this cost to be reduced very materially. But it must always remain far heavier than is the cost of literature prepared for sighted folk. It is to these that we must look for the help which will enable us to offset this great disadvantage.

And now let me ask you to consider for a moment what this reading by the aid of Louis Braille's invention really means to the blind.

To begin with, it has the immense importance of making them far more independent than they could otherwise be. This means much even to those who, like myself, can secure the services of readers at any time, for we like to feel that we are not obliged to be dependent upon kindly help or paid service, but can interest or amuse ourselves. It means that the whole wonderful world which, often, he has never seen, is laid open to the blind man. It means that he is given the key to the Treasure House of Fancy, wit, and wisdom. And, far more important, it means that he is able to acquire knowledge of all kinds, and thus to mentally equip himself for the battle of life in which many of the blind make so brave a fight. Braille music, too, enables blind folk not only to perfect themselves in playing for pleasure, but in many cases to find occupation

as musicians. Several of the most renowned organists of the day are blind.

But I do not think I need enlarge upon this. It must be evident to you that lives so trammelled as are those of the Sightless cannot fail to find an unspeakable joy and resource in the ability to read. It is not too much to say that the Emancipation of the Blind began with the introduction of embossed reading. Their pleasure and their opportunities of making good in the world will increase as this reading matter becomes cheaper and more widely disseminated among them.

And now I wonder whether I have succeeded in the object with which I set out? I wonder if I have led you to feel that you would like to help in this great effort which is being undertaken to place the making of books for the poor Blind Community upon a sounder and more practical basis—to give the Sightless the same opportunities as are possessed by yourself of gaining pleasure and absorbing knowledge through books?

I have almost taken it for granted that this is the case.

I have not asked you whether or no you will buy a book for the blind man. I have assumed that you will, and I trust most sincerely that this assumption is not too bold, and that the only real question is: WHICH BOOK WILL YOU BUY FOR THE BLIND MAN?

Books

ESSAYS AND GENERAL LITERATURE

VALE. By GEORGE MOORE. Heinemann.

One closes this last volume of the trilogy "Hail and Farewell" with definite impressions and much regret. It is the more mellow of the three, the more philosophical, the more, well, yes, even the more egotistical—attuned nicely to the now contemplative spirit of the George Moore who so horrified our fathers. As autobiography it must be ranked as a work of art, for its very sincerity unique in our letters. Nothing of its kind has appeared in this country before. This is, at any rate, literature, a masterpiece—the great work of a little man.

For that is the final impression it leaves. As one of his feudal peasants said to him, "there is no diet" in the stuff. Purporting to be a history or confession, it is essentially a dissertation, sometimes scurrilous, often trivial, at times petty and ridiculous, a rambling, entirely irresponsible chronicle of fancies, moods, impressions and *potins*, in short, an autobiography of indiscretions etched in with a charm which approaches genius. It is immense fun, for Mr. Moore gives himself away with the rest of his friends. He shows himself to be the most selfish of men, devoid of sentiment or depth, or largeness of view; the victim of art, true only to himself. Now, at any rate, we know our George Moore, sitting, as he tells us, with his rump comfortably ensconced in an armchair, watching the smoke of his cigar curl up under the candelabra, meditating on his new metamorphosis—harmless at last, a free man. He will not be a *vieux marcheur* and ogle little girls. Sex, Ireland, his friends, even A. E., he has put away from him. And he is contented. He can look on his Manet, his Aubusson carpet—he likes Scarlatti: what more can a

middle-aged gentleman want! And that makes one wonder what Mr. Moore might have become, had he not been born a gentleman and gone to Paris as a young man, to study art with a valet? With a valet, he tells us so himself. In "Vale," too, we learn other things about him. Plainly he was a bad bed-fellow; his love affairs reveal a comic trepidation, and he evidently missed a good many opportunities. No "dog," for sure. And Stella—Ah! Stella is a tell-tale story.

Mr. Moore is entrancing, cutting up his friends, dissecting, analysing, the true Irishman, himself at last, and no longer a Frenchman. The man who hates Brahms is not likely to be a good lover; nor do we gather from him that he was or ever aspired to be a lover. He is just an affluent, self-absorbed child-man (the artist-discoverer), rather *cocasse*, very limited and delightfully ingenuous, whose attitude is really epicene, sensual only in its æstheticity. All this he shows us in the parody of an æsthetico-literary widow Wadman—as good as Sterne, though Moore never read Sterne and is still contemplating reading the thirty-six volumes of the great English book. Art, life—all this, all given to us now from his armchair, and he, too, considered the wickedest man in the country! Awfully droll, but then life is awfully droll, as one and the same historical fact always shows itself twice, once as tragedy, then as comedy. So Moore's tragedies are our joy, and now to him they are comedy. Human comedy, all too human for some, no doubt, just Adam, naked and unashamed, as Eve took him. All the earlier part of the book is extraordinarily good; the aperçus into his childhood, the death of his father, life in 'the Wood,' as a Bohemian in Paris, and then there is the story of Mr. Plunkett's ass. . . . Mr. George Moore is at rest. All hail! Moriturus, he salutes the world. Not a bit! If he has not regenerated Ireland, he has given us another Sterne, and now he has gone off to Jerusalem, it may be to write a book on the new tramways there; for he is consistent only in one thing, an intellectual contempt for Catholicism. Let us hope he will come back with a new discovery and write a book on the real Magdalen, or an epicurean affair with some ample-bosomed Morgiana, or tell us how it was that St. Paul never wrote a word of the Bible, or why the Gallic cock is superior to the historical bird that carolled the betrayal of Jesus.

FICTION

AN ENGLISHMAN LOOKS AT THE WORLD. By H. G. WELLS. (Cassell and Co.)

This is Wells the journalist, and the greatest journalist of his time. A little irritating, no doubt, as all "unrestrained" commentary on things must be; nor, so far as the writing is concerned, can it be held up as a work of distinction. "And the sands of our Imperial opportunity twirl through the neck of the hour-glass"—this is the sort of thing, but otherwise it is bright, lucid stuff, quick with the imagination of the Seer. Then it is honest—genuine, sincere, a quality so rare nowadays that it compels even the hostile reader to attention. In France, Mr. Wells has long been recognised as a thinker, and there the trained, critical mind of the Frenchman rates his imaginative flights far higher than his powers as a novelist or, in other words, as artist. After reading this motley compilation, I agree. For motley though it is, it is yet a unity: it reflects a personality; it reveals a highly constructive and synthetic mind; above all, it dazzles through sheer force of clear thinking.

Here we have an essentially modern spirit free from tradition, cant, and prejudice; free because Mr. Wells is himself big enough to take wing at any time and at every opportunity "on his own." And the value of his thought is diagnosis. With the discernment of genius, he puts his finger on the weak place. A Socialist, he is able to examine coldly the theories of Marx, the foibles of the Fabians, the vanity of Bernard Shaw, the inconsistent eccentricities of two such performers as Chesterton and Belloc; and he has the intellectual man's contempt for the interested shallowness of the modern politician. Mr. Wells is, in fact, always ahead of his time; he is astonishingly right. Like all really strong men, he recognises change and even welcomes it. He is willing to accept the new, to admit that he may have been wrong. There is nothing of the reactionary in the man. He is the personification of the modern spirit, very brave, very challenging, a gloriously young man.

Sometimes one is surprised, for example, when one finds him opposing divorce on the ground of insanity; sometimes one feels he is on unfamiliar terrain when he descants

on foreign politics and German policy; perhaps, too, on the subject of the Dreadnought he is a little amateurish. Even a Mr. Wells cannot know everything. But he is never silly, never dull, never unsuggestive. Indeed, the remarkable feature about this book is the number of illuminating, searching, sensible things he has managed to say. All politicians should read it carefully, and ponder over that sentence: "Now a newspaper that dared to fill its columns mainly with Parliamentary debates, with a full report of the trivialities, the academic points, the little familiar jokes, and entirely insincere pleadings which occupy that gathering would court bankruptcy." The book is a manual of diagnosis, and should be in the hands of everybody, whether they agree with it or not. At any rate, it is splendidly alive, with enough matter for leading articles to fill the Press for six months. For the novel, Mr. Wells claims freedom. "We are going to appeal to the young and the hopeful and the curious against the established, the dignified, and defensive. Before we have done, we will have all life within the scope of the novel."

We heartily commend that spirit. That is what we need in our sloppy, servile attitude to-day—art which is sincere, life which is not afraid. It is astonishing to find Mr. Wells so young. It is astonishing to read in a reprint of journalistic articles a doctrine of State reason which is a philosophy. And it is no jeremiad, though Mr. Wells writes with a religious fervour. Mr. Wells believes, and, being a bit of a Seer, he is able to help us to believe, too —in ourselves.

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

NOTES OF A SON AND BROTHER. By HENRY JAMES. Macmillan.

Frankly, this book is beyond us—alike in manner and matter, though let us hasten to add that we willingly concede the fault to lie in our too rude, or under-educated imagination or, shall we say, power of objectival detachment. The beauty in it—yes, we can gather threads of it from Mr. Henry James' web, by which to cling to and mount with him, like some parasitic spider hastening on its exodus, and with these we can dwell—his filial devotion, the delicious harmony of the home, the venerability of the

"dear parent," the portrait of Mary Temple, the subliminal ecstasy of the cultivated literary conscientiousness, the devotional pen-worship of the brother and the influences spun with a method which is admittedly a novelty with its mantles of grouping and analytical sensation suborned to a process of deliberate acidulation. We tried again and again to catch hold of one of these strands or floating filaments, to submerge ourselves, to rise with him into space; but there, why tell of our failures, why confess that we found ourselves continually having to go back, to start again, to parse even the sentences, that we thought of wet towels and cafeine vigils reminiscent of our school youth when long pages of some dead language had to be acquired to scamp through some ludicrous academic examination. And so to our shame, be it said, we closed this book with a sense of consternation, all the more strange, perhaps, as we had just risen from the Aesthetics of Benedetto Croce with a complete sense of our lucidity. Not to understand is, of course, not to appreciate. We plead guilty. We miss the revelation, for the soul (there is always a soul in Turgenef, in Strindberg, in Tolstoi, in Flaubert, in Sterne, in Gosse, in George Moore, and in the Words of Jesus always) the soul is lost in a holocaust of words, which leaves only the mind bare, the nebulosity of thought, as it were, struggling in chaos behind the retina, bemused through an over-ample filagree of expression. And that this art of word-mysticism should come from an American, and be, in its originality and success, so essentially American, so palpably of the soil and savour of "dear old Walt"; this is a thing we offer to the theorists to expound and descant on. To us, it is notable. In imaginative literature, Strindberg rose to the highest flights in what he called his metaphysical plays, but he was careful always to be remarkably simple in the language. He sought to portray imagination and the receptivities of the imagination through thought-suggestion, indirectly, therefore; Mr. Henry James would portray it directly. The difference is worth inquiring into, though here we have no time for it. It is a question for the professors.

As a fact, we find neither Strindberg with his Swedenborgian invocations, nor Mr. Henry James with his own more subtle and literary furniture, so "tremendously thrilling" as Ibsen with his giant economy and mosaic

spacings, perhaps because we only really can imagine when something, at any rate, is left to our imagination.

By very force of association, we are dissociated. By very subtlety of evocation, the projection recedes. By the very constitution of communication, we become shipwrecked on the seas of empirical illusion, tossed hither and thither on the great rollers driving us we would we knew whither, to gaze up from time to time at the stars shining overhead whence to draw hope and, even without a compass, some consciousness of our direction and our cosmic attachments.

THE LIFE OF THE EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH. By FRANCIS GRIBBLE. Eveleigh Nash. 16*s*. net.

REMARKABLE WOMEN OF FRANCE. By LIEUT.-COLONEL ANDREW C. P. HAGGARD, D.S.O. Stanley Paul, 16*s*. net.

ENSLAVERS OF KINGS. By THORNTON HALL. Heath Cranton and Ouseley. 15*s*. net.

A BOOK OF DUCHESSES. By ALICE E. ROBBINS. Melrose. 10*s*. 6*d*. net.

There is a fine flavour of courtly rottenness in this kind of literature. Somebody, evidently, is interested in the biographies of Kings and Duchesses and other god-favoured individuals—else why is the market flooded with them? But Mr. Gribble's book is unquestionably interesting; he handles his subject well, and dispassionately, though some sub-title such as "The Indiscretions of the Archdukes" would have explained more accurately the scope of the work. Not that the Emperor is not efficiently portrayed; we get a good impression of this tricky old man, the jesuitical actor-manager, whose sheer longevity threatens to invest him with a halo of saintliness. And we learn many things about the enigmatical Empress Elizabeth. But above all things, we watch Nemesis at work upon the whole brood of crazy Habsburgs; we see how the fateful words of Countess Karolyi—one of a thousand mothers who had good cause to curse Francis Joseph—are fulfilling themselves to the letter. Mr. Gribble presents us with a noble *catalogue raisonné* of what Bismarck called the "Idiot Archdukes"—a catalogue which does not err on the side of unnecessary spiciness; on the contrary,

it betrays a laudable reticence in regard to certain matters. *The Emperor*, he rightly says, *has been standardised; the Archdukes have not.* This is well put: they are centrifugal. He establishes lucidly the difference between the madness of the Bavarian House and that of the Habsburgs; in fact, this volume of his is really capital reading.

Colonel Haggard shows less verve and originality; his *Remarkable Women of France* is much in the nature of book-making. France has ever been celebrated for its cult of the "Ewig-weibliche," and here you can see what happens under such conditions in Royal circles and puzzle, as you well may, which is the more astonishing—the stupidity of the Kings or the cupidity of their women. The book begins with a little talk about Joan of Arc, but this is the merest red-herring; the rest is all about intrigues and finery. Whether or not we like three hundred pages of this kind of stuff, one thing is quite certain: Colonel Haggard knows his subject.

Enslavers of Kings is on a lower plane. It is less *documenté* and more flamboyant: perhaps, on that account, more interesting to the general reader—whoever that may be. It does not pretend to be anything but carefully-selected tittle-tattle, mostly about the illicit *amours* of royal personages. How delightful to learn that Margaret of Valois "had two lovers before she had passed her twelfth year"; that Christina of Sweden "loved especially to talk to men on subjects rarely mentioned between the sexes" —to be told all about the "boyish dallying" of George III with Hannah Lightfoot, and how that Frederick the Great was once captivated by a woman. The artful old dodger! He, too, knew the uses of the red-herring. Catherine of Russia was much more *normal.* She "yearned for hot-blood passion, and never lacked it. Lover after lover succeeded each other in her arms, with at times bewildering quickness. . . ."

After such an orgy of the senses, the *Book of Duchesses*, promising as its title is, falls rather flat; indeed, it acts quite like a cold shower-bath. The authoress has a high opinion of duchesses: "I am going to introduce you to good society," she says. And, by Jove, she does! The consequence is, that we are considerably bored; we find it difficult to breathe the rarefied atmosphere in which these Olympian creatures move and have their being. In other words, she gives us too much gossip, and too little scandal.

The good woman—as exemplified by a certain duchess—*can never die out. For she carries in her hand a torch. And the torch has been lighted by God.* So be it.

THE DIARY OF SAMUEL PEPYS. Edited with additions by HENRY B. WHEATLEY, F.S.A. G. Bell and Sons. Eight Vols. 5*s*. each.

Refreshing, most refreshing, after this kind of twaddle is Pepys—Pepys the unique. His full-blooded zest in work and play, his unclouded outlook upon life, his healthy curiosity—this is exactly what we need, every jack man of us, in these bilious and introspective days; this is the elixir of life. A dose of Pepys before going to bed is the only Pepsine worth talking about. And no excuse nowadays, with a cheap and admirably indexed edition like this—no excuse whatever. Those everlasting vows, and glorious relapses from grace! "It being dark I did by agreement aller à la house de Bagwell, and there after a little playing and baisando we did go up in the dark. . . ." And so to bed.

TRAVEL

LETTERS FROM GREECE. By JOHN MAVROGORDATO. Secker. 1*s*. net.

When the reports of the massacres and counter-massacres committed by Bulgarians, Albanians, Servians and Greeks on one another in the War of the Allies began to arrive, the London editors found themselves in considerable difficulties. Very few of them had read *Candide*, and some of the leader writers had forecasts that the Christians would not only ravish and massacre defenceless Moslems, but that the Allies would seek to extirpate one another. We gather from a hint in Mr. Mavrogordato's Preface that the London Liberal newspaper to which he was "accredited," suppressed all his inconvenient letters which exposed the simple, not to say primitive, proceedings of the Bulgarian Army in the field. Under the title of *Letters from Greece*, he has now republished the articles he wrote on the spot, and the "corrective letters" which he addressed, later, to the Bulgar-Liberals of Fleet Street.

Mr. Mavrogordato's lucid account of the Refugee Camp at Salonica, his dry and restrained story of the massacre committed by the Bulgarian troops at Serres, and his exposure of the trumped-up charges of Mrs. Archibald Little's "Correspondents," carry entire conviction. Apart from their value as political controversy, the *Letters from Greece* have definite literary value from the dry touches of humour scattered through the pages. What could be better than the remark dated Nov. 20, 1912: "We in Salonica have not the slightest fear of the agreement of the Allies failing when the time comes for the division of the spoil"?

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